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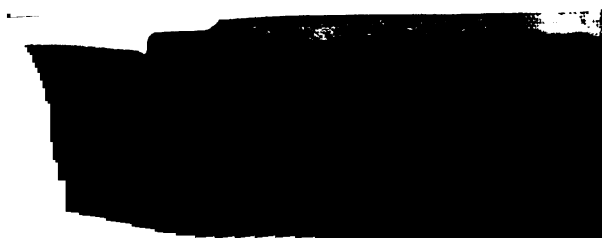
THE GIFT OF

HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER

NEVART AND ARMINÉ DIKIJIAN

1955





ARMENIA,
THE ARMENIANS, AND THE
TREATIES.

M. 21 - 271

BY

M. G. ROLIN-JAEQUEMYS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE
REVUE DE DROIT INTERNATIONAL ET DE LÉGISLATION COMPARÉE
(BRUSSELS),
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JOHN HEYWOOD, 1, PATERNOSTER BUILDINGS, E.C.,
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PREFACE.

THOSE who take any interest in foreign affairs do not need to be told that there is such a thing in politics as the Armenian Question. Attention is occasionally drawn to it and sympathy aroused by statements made in Parliament, by letters in the newspapers, and especially by accounts which reach us from time to time of fresh outrages perpetrated upon the Armenians with the connivance, and often at the hands of, their Turkish masters. But our knowledge of the subject is fragmentary. Since 1881 the Foreign Office has withheld all official information, but the diplomatic correspondence and the Consular reports which were published prior to that date contain an abundance of facts bearing upon the condition of Armenia and upon its international relations. It is desirable that these facts should be generally known, and it is perhaps some reflection upon ourselves that we should have to go for what we want to a foreign source. The most minute and comprehensive study of the Armenian Question that has yet appeared is from the pen of M. G. Rolin-Jaequemyns, President of the Belgian Institute of International Law, and published in the "International Law Review," the organ of the Institute. It is comprised in two papers, the first of which appeared in 1887, the second in 1889. A third is to follow, bringing down the history of the question to the present time; and it would much facilitate this portion of the author's task if the Foreign Office could be prevailed upon to lay before Parliament the accumulated information which is doubtless at its disposal. In the meantime, the papers already published contain all that is essential to a thorough understanding of the political aspects of the question, and it has therefore been decided to publish them, in the belief that they will serve to bring the Armenian Question home to us, and help to quicken our sense of obligations which are half forgotten. The aim of these prefatory remarks is to present the facts

from an English point of view, and to raise the question whether it not be possible for this country, notwithstanding the admitted difficulty of the situation, to do something towards ameliorating the condition of a much injured and singularly interesting people, who have numerous claims upon our sympathy, even apart from the duties which we have voluntarily assumed on their behalf.

In the midst of their misfortunes the Armenians take a legitimate pride in the antiquity of their race. They are one of the oldest nations in the world. At the dawn of history they are found inhabiting a mountainous region extending from the south-eastern corner of the Black Sea towards the shores of the Caspian, which is still their home. They have never migrated in conquering bodies to take possession of other lands. They have clung to the soil which was cultivated by their ancestors. Mount Ararat, familiar to us in Biblical story, may be regarded as the ancient territorial centre of the nation. The Euphrates and the Tigris take their rise in Armenian valleys. The storms of foreign conquest have swept over the land times without number, but the people have maintained their identity unimpaired. The national sentiment which animates them has never been destroyed, nor even lost its force, and they have often recovered their independence. Under various dynasties, the inner life of the nation has flowed on in the old channels from age to age. The Ottoman yoke has been the worst to bear, but after five centuries of oppression the Armenian nation still retains its ancient vitality. It has overflowed its territorial borders into every part of Turkey, and Armenian colonies are found in the chief commercial cities of Europe; but when scattered, they never forget that the streams all come from a common source. The national tie is universally recognised, and in all their wanderings their thoughts turn instinctively to the home of their kind, the cradle of their race.

The persistent sense of nationality which distinguishes the Armenians derives much of its strength from a common faith. They are a Christian people, whose lot has been cast beyond the frontiers of Christendom. Twenty years before the conversion of Constantine, Christianity became the religion of the State, and the lamp of faith then kindled has not died out. The Mahometans conquered them, but could not convert them as they did their neighbours, the Persians. The Apostle of the Armenians was St. Gregory the Illuminator, so called from the gospel radiance which his preaching diffused over the land. Towards the close of his labours

he founded a monastery at Etchmiadzin, a few miles from Mount Ararat, and through the vicissitudes of fifteen centuries it has been, as it is still, the ecclesiastical centre of the nation. Recent changes have brought it within Russian territory, but ancient associations overleap the political barrier. The supreme authority in the Armenian Church is the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin. The chief ecclesiastical dignitary of the Armenians in Turkey is the Patriarch of Constantinople, who is at the same time the civil representative of the nation. He is appointed with the concurrence of the Sultan, and is the recognised medium of communication with the Government. This arrangement looks well in theory, but it is illusory in practice. The Patriarch may indeed pour forth his complaints, but he cannot compel the Government to listen to them; and, as a matter of fact, they generally fall on deaf ears.

The Armenians, in common with the other non-Mahometan communities of the Ottoman Empire, have always been allowed to manage their own ecclesiastical and civil affairs. This privilege, originating in the contempt felt by the true believer for the infidels he had brought under his yoke, has an appearance of toleration which is utterly deceptive; but it at least bears witness to the existence of an Armenian nationality, with ancient traditions and certain recognised rights. After the Crimean War, in 1860, the Sultan was persuaded, in consideration of the manifold services rendered by the Armenians, and of their unwavering loyalty, to grant them a Constitution for more effectually guaranteeing to them those rights in the management of their religious and national affairs which in theory at least they had always possessed. But although proclaiming the loftiest principles, and expressing its provisions in magniloquent terms, it conferred upon the Armenians nothing of any civil or political value, and even of such shadowy boons as it professed to convey the Porte is now endeavouring to deprive them. The Constitution abounds in guarantees against themselves, which they do not want; but it does not contain a single guarantee against the tyranny of the Turkish authorities, which is the thing they do want. It is full of ingenious devices to prevent the sheep from hurting each other, but it makes no provision for protecting them from packs of ravening wolves outside the fold. The chief merit of the Constitution is that it provides an authorised mouthpiece at Constantinople through which the cries of the oppressed may find utterance, and though the Porte may close its ears, the rest of the world will listen.

The Armenians in and near Constantinople and in the mercantile cities are able in many ways to take care of themselves. Our chief concern is with those who live in Armenia, and who constitute two-thirds of the whole nation, or rather of that large part of it which is found in Turkish territory. Extensive districts of Armenia, lying beyond Lake Van, have at various times been stolen by Persia, when Persia was more powerful than she is to-day. Russia has re-stolen some of them from Persia, and has since made large annexations of territory from Turkish Armenia on her own account. The Armenians who have become the subjects of the Czar are well treated, and those in Persia have a fair amount of protection. It is only in Turkish Armenia that they are ruthlessly and systematically oppressed. In this remote nook of land, seldom visited by Europeans, and far removed from the great centres of public opinion, they are at the mercy of the Turkish officials, from the governor of the province to the village mouktars, and would have to suffer in silence were it not for their friends at Constantinople. What is their situation? Practically it comes to this: they are without any legal protection for life or property. When they suffer wrong the authorities afford them no redress. And they have constantly to suffer wrong. The Kurds are a half-savage race, who have their haunts among the hills, where they live in a state of semi-independence. They disdain all industry, and maintain themselves by depredation. With dagger and revolver in their belts, and a rifle flung across their shoulders, they swoop down upon the villages, carrying off the sheep and cattle of the peasant grazier and the garnered harvest of the husbandman. They do not always discriminate nicely between Mahometan and Christian, but their chief victims are the Armenians, whom they can pillage with impunity. They give a wide berth to the Turkish landowner, they avoid all needless entanglements with the local authorities, and they cultivate a good understanding with any troops that may be in the district. A decent show of hostility is kept up by the authorities, and sometimes the soldiers are sent to look after them, but it all comes to nothing. The Kurds are chartered robbers, and they know by experience that, so long as they confine their pillaging to the Armenians, they have nothing to fear. The Armenian peasant who wakes in the morning with his household goods around him, his autumn stock of grain in the barn, and a few sheep and cattle on the farm adjacent, may be stripped of everything before night, and find himself reduced to absolute beggary.

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He can do nothing. It is useless applying to the authorities. I poor to bribe them, and nothing else will stir their zeal. I misfortune, he may have in a few days a visit from the T gatherer, who will not fail to haul him to prison if he does not Government tithe on the cattle and grain of which he has robbed.

Since the Russian conquest of the Caucasus, there has been migration of Circassians into Turkish territory. They have over at the rate of many thousands a year. As they are good the Turks, they must beg or starve. This turning of the Circassians themselves, so that they do not pillage the wrong parties. The are sure and safe game. A roving Circassian sees a modest with its attached farm plot, which suits him. Without any ce turns out the occupant, and takes possession. The evicted or redress. He must beg or starve. This turning of the Circassians to prey upon the settled peasantry is confined to the Christian population. It was tried in Bulgaria till the Great Powers and compelled the authorities to ship the marauders away. They only can pursue the business of appropriation without check. Armenians harried out of the land, and their places filled by another breed. It is impossible to get rid of them by wholesale clearance would leave the land untitled, and there would be pay the taxes. But the Turks have no objection to seeing the be best, or to settle elsewhere. To thin them out and so gradually rooted up and flung away, either to die, which would among a Mahometan population is not a bad policy where a is impracticable.

It is easy to gather from these general facts in what re Armenians stand to the Turkish authorities. It is within the say that they are unrecognised except for purposes of official. Practically they are outlaws; they stand outside the law, except is used for taxation. Then it finds them out. In this case it would from the rapacity of Turkish neighbours. In this case it would scandal which might be reported at Constantinople to use vic

there is no need for it. Chicanery will do as well. Nothing is easier than to raise a pretence of title to serve as the foundation for a suit. This is taken into the law courts, where, with venal judges, whose palms have been well greased beforehand, the result may be foreseen. If an appeal should be carried to Constantinople, and an inquiry be ordered, the local officials are not at all disconcerted. Perhaps the Commissioner who is sent down becomes a party to the plot. If he is too honest for this, which rarely happens, it is easy to throw dust in his eyes, and to draw up a report which will show that everything has been done in perfect accordance with the precepts of the Koran. An act of injustice once perpetrated is never remedied. Judgment by Koran law is irreversible. The injured cries out in vain. In one set of courts his evidence is not received at all, and in the civil courts, where it is nominally allowed, it goes for little if a Mahometan is prepared to swear on the other side. The honour of a Christian household is no safer than its property. In scenes of pillage the women are the first prey, but honour as well as property can be compassed in a quiet way. If a good-looking girl has the misfortune to please the fancy of some great man, he has only to carry her off, and then pretend that she is converted to the faith of Islam. This is an effectual bar to her restoration. It is only a fiction; but what with shameless lying, terror exercised upon the victim, and an appeal to the pious frenzy of the populace, it will pass muster with the authorities. Such atrocities might well provoke resistance, but that is out of the question. The Armenians are not allowed to carry arms. They have no means of defending themselves. They can only yield and suffer with that helpless submission which is forced upon them. Resistance means total ruin.

The first feeling that cannot fail to be excited in every humane mind by a review of these facts is one of pity for the victims; the next perhaps is one of indignation against a Power pretending to be civilised which can permit or tolerate, and in many instances instigate, the infliction of such wrongs upon any portion of its unoffending subjects. But we are hardly entitled to indulge in these sentiments, and to do nothing more. We are really a party to the question which arises between the Armenians and the Porte. We are to some extent answerable for the picture of misery presented to our eyes. The Power which perpetrates these wrongs has brought itself under certain obligations to us, as well as to others, with regard to the state of things which moves

our pity. We are not obliged to be merely sympathetic and silent witnesses. We have a right of intervention, overwhelmingly strong from a moral point of view, and sanctioned by International Treaties. The oppression practised upon the Armenians is a violation of solemn pledges given by Turkey to the Great Powers, which we, along with them, have a right to call upon her to redeem. Apart from the right of interference which we share in common with the other Powers, there is one which belongs exclusively to ourselves, and which, from the geographical incidence of the obligations assumed, points specially to Armenia. In what way it may be most expedient to exercise this right is a question which may have to be very carefully considered, but the right exists, and we cannot easily free ourselves from the duty which it involves.

Let us go back for a moment to the time of the Crimean War. The object of that war was said to be the maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. But it was not out of any such consideration that the war arose. The integrity of the Ottoman Empire was an afterthought. The immediate cause of the war was the *ultimatum* presented at Constantinople by Prince Menschikoff on behalf of Russia, virtually claiming protectoral rights over those subjects of the Sultan who were members of the Greek Church. It was a claim to be entitled to protect them from acts of oppression to which they might be exposed as a subject race professing a religion other than that of the State. Russia naturally put the members of the Greek Church in the foreground, because it is the Church to which she belongs; but the rest of the Christian population, exclusive only of Protestants, who looked to England for protection, and of members of the Latin Church, who looked to France, were brought substantially within the claim. Russia would never have overlooked the Armenians. Simply as Christians not yet entitled to the protection of any other Power, and apart from the close connection which subsists historically between the Greek and Armenian Churches, Russia would never have seen them oppressed as they are to-day, without interfering effectually on their behalf. In point of fact, while Russia spoke chiefly of the Greek Church, the other Powers in their diplomatic documents preferred to speak of the Christian subjects of the Porte, a description in which, of course, the Armenians were included. The other Powers chose to regard the claim put forward by Russia as menacing the territorial rights of Turkey. Hence they abetted her in rejecting the *ultimatum*, and joined her as allies when she was attacked. The result of the war

was the admission of Turkey to share in the advantages of the public law of Europe, and the recognition of any movement threatening the integrity of the Ottoman Empire as a matter of common concern to the Powers. Thus Russia was thrust aside from the position she had wished to take up as the protector of the Christian subjects of the Porte, and in doing so the other Powers made themselves morally responsible for the execution of the task which, for political reasons, they had taken out of her hands.

To do them justice, they recognised this moral obligation, and they gave it a place in the Treaty of Paris; but they did it in their own way. One of the conditions of peace was that the Sultan should issue a firman guaranteeing the rights of his Christian subjects, and undertaking to ameliorate their condition, and that he should communicate the firman to the Great Powers. This was assumed to be done by the Sultan *proprio motu*, of his free will, and out of his abounding goodness; but it was really imposed upon him as one of the terms of peace. The firman was not issued exclusively in the interest of members of the Greek Church. It took the wider range which the Great Powers had always kept in view, and dealt in common with all the Christian subjects of the Porte. It included the Armenians just as much as if they had been specifically mentioned. In the Treaty the Powers acknowledge the receipt of the firman, and express their sense of its great importance. It is to all intents and purposes embodied in the Treaty, and though they say that it gives them no right of intervention between the Sultan and his subjects, there can be no doubt that it involves the right of inspection and supervision, and of effectual remonstrance with the Sultan himself if the obligations recognised by the firman are disregarded. From the date of this Treaty the Christian population of Turkey have been placed under a European protectorate, in which we have not the least important share.

Nor has the principle embodied in the Treaty of Paris been allowed to remain a dead letter. It has been invoked in aid of the Christians of the Lebanon, and on a much larger scale on behalf of Roumanians, Servians, and Bulgarians, as well as of the subject race in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These countries are favoured by their geographical situation. They lie between the frontiers of three empires, and they kindle rivalry on political grounds. Armenia is far away. It furnishes no short and easy road to Constantinople. Europe has heard much of the oppression from which


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the Bulgarians suffered, and their deliverance from the *Turks* considered a sufficient recompense for a great war. But *they* are in a worse plight than the *Bulgarians* ever were. *The Kurds in Bulgaria*. There were a few imported *Circassians*, shipped off to *Armenia* at the close of the late war; but *they* reinforced every year by fresh hordes from the mountains, nearness to civilisation imposed some check upon their excess. But *they* derived some hands of the *Turkish* authorities. Their case was from the war which enfranchised the *Bulgarians*. *Their case* was an express engagement of the *Porte* to ameliorate their condition embodied in the *Treaty of Berlin*.

Here again it was *Russia* that took the lead. Clause 16 in of *San Stefano* bound the *Porte* to effect at once the beneficial and reforms which local circumstances rendered necessary in the inhabited by the *Armenians*, and to guarantee their security to *Kurds* and the *Circassians*. If that *Treaty* had been allowed *Russia* would have been the protector of the *Armenians*, and he might have been trusted to enforce the obligations undertaken. But *England* would not allow the *Treaty* to stand. In a famous Lord *Salisbury* demanded that it should be laid before the *Great Britain* for revision, and that the final *Treaty* should be one between *Turkey*, and not between *Turkey* and *Russia*. By this proceeding part of her Foreign Minister, *England* took upon herself a special responsibility which *Russia* had assumed alone. The case of a special instance of the alterations which he required. The *Memoirs* agreed upon between him and Count *Schouvaloff* previous to Congress contains the provision that the promises stipulated of *Armenia* by the *Treaty of San Stefano* are not to be made exclusively, but to *England* as well. When the Congress met, of the *Treaty of San Stefano* relating to *Armenia* was adopted, disastrous alteration, and with an addition proposed by Lord *Salisbury*. As the clause stood before the change was made, the *Russians* which were then occupying *Armenia* would have remained *Turkey* had at least begun to fulfil her promises, and there was

been a material guarantee for the execution of the Treaty. At the suggestion of Lord Salisbury, the words which contained this stipulation were struck out. The addition he proposed was that Turkey should inform the Powers periodically of the measures she had taken for the carrying out of the promised reforms, and that they should watch over their application. Practically this was an inadequate substitute for the material guarantee contemplated by Russia; but it was precise, it threw a fresh obligation upon Turkey, and it invested the Powers with the right of constant supervision. M. Rolin-Jaequemyns enters into the details of these transactions. It is enough here to emphasize the fact that, at the instance of England, the duty of watching over the interests of the Armenians, which Russia had undertaken, was assumed by all the Powers; that it had been expressly stipulated by Lord Salisbury that the promises which Turkey had made to Russia should be made to England also; and that though as regards the Treaty of Berlin England counts but as one of the Signatory Powers, she assumed by her conduct throughout by far the largest share of moral responsibility.

England has other rights as regards Turkey besides those which, in common with the other Powers, she derives from the Treaty of Berlin. A month before the Armenian Question was brought before the Congress, Lord Salisbury entered into a separate Convention with the Porte, by which England undertook to defend the Asiatic territories of the Sultan. In return for this undertaking it was agreed that England should occupy and administer the isle of Cyprus, but this was not the whole of the equivalent. The Sultan furthermore bound himself to introduce the reforms necessary to ensure good administration, and to afford protection to his Christian and other subjects inhabiting the territories in question. A glance at the map will show the geographical incidence of this Convention. The first reference was not to Asia Minor. Armenia is a mountain fortress, which guards the way to the valley of the Euphrates. If this fortress fell into the hands of Russia, an easy road would be opened for her to the coast of the Mediterranean and the banks of the Nile. Her troops would soon cross our route to India, and find their way to the head of the Persian Gulf. The Cyprus Convention has never been popular in England. It is supposed, and not without reason, to have committed us to obligations which it will be difficult to fulfil. Nevertheless, the policy of the Convention is in the line of English interests, and the more difficult it may be for us to give effect to our share of its



stipulations, the more important is it that the necessity for our doing so should not occur. The best security for Turkey would be the establishment of just and efficient administration in Armenia. Her greatest danger on the side of Russia is the existence of two millions of discontented subjects, who, though willing to be loyal, could hardly resist the temptation to wish well to an invader who brought deliverance in his train. Hence efficient defence and internal reform are bound up together. Provisions for securing both lie in the Convention side by side. With good government in Armenia, the task of defending it may be easy; without the fulfilment of that condition, it may be impossible. Even if we put aside the Convention, the facts on which it is founded would remain, and they would determine the direction which our policy and efforts would take were there no written contract. The sum of the whole is that our interests bind us to take a deep concern in Armenian affairs, and that in endeavouring to promote the welfare of the Armenians we are pursuing a course in which justice and humanity are reinforced by the strongest political considerations.

It is now thirteen years since Turkey bound herself by the Treaty of Berlin to introduce without any further delay the reforms necessary to secure good government in her Armenian provinces, and to protect her Armenian subjects against the Kurds and Circassians. Turkey reaped at once the full benefit of that agreement. The Russian troops withdrew from the neighbourhood of Constantinople. The siege of Erzeroum was abandoned. Within the time fixed by the Treaty, the whole of her territory which had been in the occupation of Russia, saving only the ceded districts, was evacuated. In short, the Ottoman Empire was saved. What has Turkey done since then to acquit herself of the obligations by which this great deliverance was won? What has she done for the Armenians? The reply to be given is that she has done nothing. Some proceedings have been taken which have proved, as they were meant to be, utterly illusive, and promises have been given again and again in magniloquent terms; but in point of fact the condition of the Armenians is as bad to-day as it was before the Treaty was signed. Turkey undertook to inform the Powers periodically of the measures taken to carry into effect the provisions of the Treaty, but no such information has been given, periodically or otherwise. What, on the other hand, has become of the duty of supervision assumed by the Powers? It may perhaps be said that their duty was limited to watching over the application of the

measures of reform devised by the Porte, and that as no such measures have been devised it was not easy to watch over their application. Certain in any case it is that the rights acquired by the Powers under the Treaty might almost as well have been non-existent. Complaints poured in from the British Consuls to Sir A. H. Layard, our Ambassador at Constantinople, and Lord Salisbury remonstrated. Twice the Powers were prevailed upon to join in Identical Notes. They drew eloquent replies from the Porte, suffused with ideas of justice and humanity, but they had no further result. The Armenian Question soon came to be mixed up with the questions relating to a rectification of the frontiers of Greece and Montenegro, and again it happened that those who were furthest off were left in the lurch. The other Powers had almost to be goaded into action by Mr. Gladstone's persistent firmness in order to obtain the surrender of Dulcigno and the fulfilment of the engagements made in favour of Greece. When these two achievements were completed, the political virtue of the Powers seemed to have exhausted itself in the effort, and there was a tacit agreement among most of them that nothing further should be done. Another attempt to unite them in a remonstrance on behalf of Armenia was made by Lord Granville, but it failed. The influence of Prince Bismarck was then all-powerful. When applied to, he said that it would be as well to allow Turkey a little rest. M. Rolin-Jaequemyns suggests that the British Government, in taking this step, were actuated chiefly by a desire to throw the responsibility of inaction upon the other Powers, and this is not at all improbable. But England had special and separate grounds on which to remonstrate with the Porte. There was no reason why she should relax her efforts when the other Powers gave in. It is likely that domestic politics had some influence on this point. The Cyprus Convention was framed in distrust of Russia, and Mr. Gladstone did not care to place too much stress upon its stipulations. But the author of that Convention is now at the head of the Government. He, at any rate, can have no excuse for neglecting to insist upon the fulfilment of promises of which he loudly boasted when, along with Lord Beaconsfield, he brought "peace with honour" from Berlin. Unfortunately, "honour" is the very point which is now in question.

The aspirations of the Armenians take no extravagant form. They do not ask for political independence. They do not demand self-government of the kind that has been conceded in Bulgaria. They do not even require that the Governors of the provinces should be of the Christian

faith. They are quite content that they should be Mahometan. They have no desire to be annexed to Russia. On the contrary, that is a consummation which they are most anxious to escape. They wish for nothing better than to remain the loyal subjects of the Sultan, and to share the political lot of Turkey, whose fortunes of peace and war they have so long shared. They only want to be able to lead quiet lives, to be safe from molestation, to preserve the honour of their families, to retain peaceable possession of the fruits of their industry—in a word, to enjoy the ordinary blessings of civilisation. The Armenians are not crying for the moon. They ask to be freed from oppression. It is no very oppressed, and they are heartily sick of these objects some reforms are necessary, but they are made at Constantinople for the benefit of European opinion. They even look with suspicion upon schemes of high-sounding promises which are made at Constantinople for the benefit of European opinion. They even look with suspicion upon schemes of reform, knowing by experience that they are sure to be followed by bitter disappointment. The chief reform necessary is a change of men. If the provincial Governors were sincerely anxious to do what is right, and were invested with full power to get rid of bad or incompetent officials, they would be able, even with the existing institutions, to effect a wonderful transformation. But some administrative changes are required in furtherance of honest intentions. Nubar-Pasha, well known for the distinguished position he has held in the service of the Khedive of Egypt, drew up a paper just before the meeting of the Berlin Congress, setting forth the reforms which he thought desirable, and which might prove sufficient. As himself an Armenian, and well acquainted with the condition of his countrymen, much weight is due to his opinion. Two things are supremely necessary—protection for life and property, that is one; the other is an intelligent and impartial administration of justice. To secure the first, a corps of gendarmes should be organised in each province. It should be composed indifferently of Mussulmans and Christians, and should be employed not only as policemen, but as protectors against any sort of marauders. Their commanding officers should be appointed by the Governor-General, and the Turkish soldiery should have orders to co-operate with them on all occasions. The intelligent and impartial administration of justice can only be secured by the establishment of independent tribunals, filled by men of upright character, who have been trained in a knowledge of the law. Justice, or

what passes under that name, is now in the hands of Government officials and servants of various grades, who are themselves among the chief oppressors. They are for the most part utterly ignorant, and the law is with them a mere instrument of personal interest or caprice. Independent tribunals are wanted to keep them in check. Nubar-Pasha recommends that the Governor of the province should be empowered to call in foreign jurists to aid him in the organisation of a Supreme Court, and to sit as judges. He is of opinion that "the social condition of the country would be improved and developed by the control of Courts in which the foreign element was appreciably represented."

We have now glanced at the principal features of the Armenian Question, and only one point remains to be considered. What is the duty of England in relation to it? There is one preliminary consideration which must never be forgotten. But for English interference there would have been no such question on our hands to-day. Russia would have settled that and every other question affecting the condition of the Christian subjects of the Sultan forty years ago, if we had permitted her. We chose to step in. We encouraged the Sultan to reject the demands of Prince Menchikoff, and by so doing assumed a moral responsibility of which we cannot divest ourselves at pleasure. Twenty-five years later we were exposed to the same temptation, and we yielded to it, this time taking upon ourselves obligations explicit and well-defined, and embodied in the public law of Europe. If we had allowed the Treaty of San Stefano to remain valid, the Russian troops would never have evacuated Armenia till Turkey had begun to carry into effect the promised reforms. At our demand the Treaty was laid before the Congress of Berlin. We cut out of the clause relating to Armenia the sentence which would have authorised the continued occupation of the country till the stipulated changes were in actual operation, and though the clause was strengthened by the addition Lord Salisbury made to it, what we did was really to substitute an undertaking on parchment for a material guarantee. The result is that England is bound by every consideration of honour to press upon Turkey the fulfilment of those obligations which Russia assuredly would have known how to enforce if we had not twice thrown ourselves across her path. No doubt the situation is difficult. Russia does not care to oblige us, nor to work with us. There are obvious reasons why she should wish rather to thwart our efforts to bring about changes which would strengthen the loyalty of the



Armenians, and throw obstacles in the way of further annexations. The other Great Powers have their hands full of their own affairs. On the Rhine and the Danube there are feuds and jealousies which keep Europe in suspense. Turkey takes shelter in these rivalries, forgets her solemn pledges, and assumes a license to do as she likes. But the duty which honour prescribes to us remains unchanged. If we cannot do all that we could wish, we are bound at least to do all that we can. In remonstrating with the Sultan, England has arguments such as no other Power can employ. Constantinople has more than once been saved by the British fleet. Turkey's hereditary foe, after tearing province after province from her dominion, stands watching at her eastern frontier, eager for an opportunity to make a fresh advance. Turkey has not many friends in Europe. To whom could she turn for help in any future combination of the Powers if the influence of England proved hostile or were withdrawn? What is the strongest consideration even now which makes it a matter of prudence at St. Petersburg to pause long before venturing upon further annexations? The wisest and surest policy for Turkey to pursue is to endeavour to win the public opinion of Europe to her side, and the way to do this is to take up honestly and energetically the task of internal reform. A contented Armenia would be of more value to her as a measure of defence than a hundred thousand armed men. It must be possible for the British Government to find opportunities for pressing such reflections as these upon the attention of the Sultan. Armed as we are with Treaty rights, he is bound to listen to our remonstrances. Lord Salisbury may be reluctant to re-open the question, but he cannot disown a duty which he deliberately undertook, and he cannot wholly divest himself of responsibility by seeking to throw it upon the other Powers. Whenever English opinion has been appealed to on behalf of the Armenians, it has responded with no uncertain voice; but the public at large are inadequately informed on the subject, and it is with a view to the remedying of this defect that attention is invited to the facts and arguments which M. Rolin-Jaequemyns has placed at our disposal in the following pages.



ARMENIA, THE ARMENIANS, AND TREATIES.

BY

M. G. ROLIN-JAEQUEMYS.

CHAPTER I.—INTRODUCTION.

CONTENTS.—Importance of the object of this work—The Armenian question, raised by Clause 61 of the Berlin Treaty, must be solved—Geographical situation of Turkish Armenia—The Armenian people: their activity, intelligence, character, and misfortunes—The Armenian territory divided amongst three masters—The Catholicos of Etchmiadzin a Russian dignitary—Possible consequences of this fact—Statistics of the population: 1st, Armenians settled in the Ottoman Empire; 2nd, Turkish Armenia; 3rd, Armenians settled outside the Ottoman Empire—Division.

NOTHING can be more attractive for every person who takes an interest in the general progress of human affairs than to study contemporary international politics in their relation to international law. In order to make this study as useful as possible, I consider it advisable not merely to devote attention to the crises which have already declared themselves, but also to point out the impending causes of mischief and disturbance. It appears to me that these causes might either be prevented or considerably mitigated if the leading States were guided more largely in their foreign policy by the rules of international justice and the reasonable observance of treaties. It is from this point of view that I desire to call attention to the abnormal condition of one of the most interesting and remarkable populations amongst those under Turkish rule. For the moment, it is true, everything points to the belief that the European Cabinets are not inordinately desirous of adding an Armenian question to all other causes of complication and anxiety. But recent examples have shown that even in the East

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it is not Cabinets that make history, and that it does not depend upon them to regulate the march of events at their pleasure, or to stop their course by affecting to ignore them. As we shall see, Clause 61 of the Treaty of Berlin brought the Armenian question within the domain of international law, not as the result of a caprice of diplomacy, but as the logical consequence of anterior facts and deeds. The same logic to-day demands the execution of Clause 61. If it remains unexecuted; if a very intelligent nation, which is cognisant of its existence, and whose claims have been solemnly recognised, continues to be oppressed with impunity; if the Turkish Government cannot or will not fulfil its promises, and if Europe forgets to remind it of them, it may, at the first opportunity, be the same with the Armenian question as it was with the Roumanian question, the Servian question, the Bulgarian question, and the Roumelian question. They belong to the surprises which are the consequences of want of foresight in diplomacy as in medicine. It is, so to speak, one of those malignant fevers which, neglected at the onset, suddenly break out with overwhelming and mortal effects. There are certainly, upon the face of the earth, populations more forlorn, more oppressed, and more unfortunate even than the Armenians; and although civilisation has its duties, civilised States cannot in strict justice be expected to constitute themselves universal Don Quixotes. But irrespective of considerations of ideal justice, or pure sentiment, there are several reasons why the international situation of Armenia claims the attention and active sympathy of the Great Powers, as well as of the Ottoman Empire. These reasons are of a topographical, ethnographical, historical, and statistical nature.

A glance at the present map of the Ottoman Empire will suffice to show the great importance to its destinies of the possession of Asia Minor. This importance will go on increasing in proportion as the European limits of Turkish rule are drawn more closely round the Bosphorus. Whether we look at the matter from the point of view of the maintenance or the early disappearance of Turkish rule, it is clear that it is in Asia Minor that the final destinies of Constantinople itself will be staked. It is equally clear that to keep possession of this vast peninsula with any security, and maintain communication with the plains of Mesopotamia and Upper Asia, there must be no enemy to be feared in the mountainous country which connects the Caucasus with the Taurus, which contains the sources of the Euphrates,

the Tigris, the Araxis, the Koura, and the Tchorok, and where valleys of incomparable fertility are protected by first-class strategical positions. That country is Armenia.

The significance of these facts, even if Armenia were peopled with backward and unintelligent tribes, becomes still greater from the fact that the predominating race yields to no other in the East in national spirit, intelligence, education, and capacity for business. There is but one opinion as to this amongst those who have seen the Armenians, either at home or in the numerous establishments which their commercial genius has founded, not only in Turkey, but in the various countries of Europe, as well as India and China. This, irrespective of the actual possession of the land, constitutes an element of strength for the Governments which deserve the gratitude of the Armenian race and profit by its activity; a source of weakness for those that give it just cause for complaint. It is also another reason why the recital of the sufferings of such a people should awaken the pity and indignation of the civilised world.

It must be admitted that the criticisms passed by some travellers on the moral worth of the Armenian character tend to counteract these feelings. Lamartine and others have spoken of the cupidity, the servility—some even of the dishonesty and perfidy of the Armenians. A young and courageous Armenian, who devotes himself with equal talent and patriotism to the task of pleading the cause of his country at the bar of public opinion, Mr. Jean Broussali, has shown the groundlessness of this reproach. In an interesting work which appeared in 1886, in a French review,⁽¹⁾ he cites, in opposition to the opinion which may have been conceived of his countrymen from some specimens met with in the bazaars or the Turkish Administration, the judgment of such observers as Lord Byron, Lorenz Rigler, Ubicini, and Dulaurier. Lamartine himself, in spite of his unfavourable prejudices, calls the Armenians the Swiss of the East. Dulaurier compares them by preference to the Dutch. Lorenz Rigler declares that their keen love of money does not prevent them from being strictly honest. Ubicini makes a profound distinction between the Armenian of Constantinople and of

(1) *Les revendications de l'Arménie*, par Jean Broussali, dans la *Revue française de l'étranger et des colonies*. Vol. iii. 1886. March and June, page 199 and following, 507 and following. Mr. Broussali has since given lectures on the Armenian question with great success in several French towns, viz., Lyons, Marseilles, Montpellier, Bordeaux, &c.

the Levantine ports, and the Armenian of Tauris or of Erzeroum, the very cradle of the race, where the independent and original character of the people has remained unchanged by the lapse of time. Mr. Broussali judiciously observes that the degeneracy of the Armenians transplanted to Constantinople is not peculiar to them. It is how the Greek, who in the mountains of Epirus and Macedonia was brave and warlike, contrasts with the Greek of Phanar, who, at the present day, is an enervated and grasping society, was formerly the instrument of the Turks for all their tyrannical works. The Roumanians and the Bulgarians are there to attest it. There is even a singular analogy in the successively played at Constantinople by two subject races, whose ability succeeded in getting hold of the direction of the Ottoman Empire. Until the insurrection which effected the enfranchisement of Greece, the Greeks of Phanar held, in fact, the reins of government. The Armenians have succeeded them; Engelhardt remarks, in some fidelity degenerates into servility. I hasten to add that there are amongst them, as elsewhere, generous hearts, men of sincere patriotism, who make great

(¹) Lamartine, *Voyage en Orient*, t. ii., page 190. Ubcini, *Lettres sur la Turquie*, 1853-1854. Lorenz Rigler, *La Turquie et les habitants*, Vienna, 1852 (in German). The preceding quotations are borrowed from Mr. Broussali's articles.—I find in a German work the following sketch of the Armenians, considered physically: "They are of tall stature, slender, but fairly robust; have fine regular features, straight noses, large dark eyes, full of fire, and dark, bushy hair and eyebrows of quite an Asiatic type of beauty; their dark complexions are animated by their black eyes, and in public they only appear with long white veils. The Armenians of both sexes have long abandoned the national costume—for men, the caftan, white trousers, and high fur cap; and for women, the dress draped in Oriental fashion, and adopted European fashions. The expression of the eyes and features of the Armenians has that acuteness which, combined with their taste and talent for commerce, has earned them the surname of 'the Jews of the East.' A Russian proverb says: 'Two Armenians make a Greek, two Greeks a devil.' Whilst the Armenian at home, devoting himself to agriculture, is represented as being of a strong and open character, peaceable, charitable, and thrifty, the one who has settled abroad in business there, has lost the simplicity of the manners of his race; he is prompt at learning everything, but also cunning, deceitful, and greedy." (Russland, *Sitten und Gebräuche*, geschildert von Friedrich Meyer von Waldeck. Leipzig, vol. i., page 194.) It appears from all these portraits that the character of the Armenians is varied and modified by his surroundings. Where is the people of which the said?

(²) Engelhardt, *La Turquie et le Tanzimat*, vol. ii., page 207, quoted by Mr.

raise up their fellow-citizens, and who make the greatest efforts for the promotion of public education amongst the Armenians.⁽¹⁾

Lord Byron summed up in the following simple and eloquent terms his impressions of the moral condition of the Armenians: "It would perhaps be difficult to find in the annals of a nation less crime than in those of this people, whose virtues are those of peace, and whose vices are the result of the oppression it has undergone."⁽²⁾ And what oppression! Gibbon wrote a hundred years ago: "The helpless nation has seldom been permitted to enjoy the tranquillity of servitude. From the earliest period to the present hour Armenia has been the theatre of perpetual war: the lands between Tauris and Erivan were dispeopled by the cruel policy of the Sophis; and myriads of Christian families were transplanted, to perish or to propagate in the distant provinces of Persia."⁽³⁾

The Armenian race could not have withstood this work of destruction if it had not been preserved by its invincible attachment to its language, its national Church, and the solid organisation of its family life. It is that which still constitutes its strength, and which must be kept more and more in sight in proportion as the fatal march of events tends to drive the Turkish Empire back to its starting point.

It is true that Armenia, in its present state, is far from being exclusively Turkish. At the commencement of the seventeenth century, after a series of horrible wars, it was divided between Turkey and Persia. In 1827, Russia, already mistress of Georgia, entered the lists, and the conquests of Paskievitch, which were confirmed by the Treaty of Turkmentchai, of 10th February, 1828, deprived Persia of the most precious portion of her Armenian possessions. In 1878, the Treaty of Berlin again increased Russia's share, this time at the expense of the Porte, which, by the Treaty of Adrianople, had already been deprived, on the 14th September, 1829, of a part of the Pashalik of Akhaltske. But this cutting up of Armenia into three slices is far from simplifying the problem of its future destiny. Leaving all other considerations at one side, it may at the very least be concluded that it is a matter of absolute urgency for both Europe and the Porte to attend to the good administration of Turkish Armenia, and not to do so would be to

(¹) Broussali, *ibid*, page 512.

(²) *Correspondence*, letter 258, Venice, 2nd January, 1817. Quotation by Broussali, page 511

(³) *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. xlvii.

facilitate and justify the installation of the Russians in the whole country. This is all the more true, as the residence of the supreme head of the Armenian Church is at this very time on Russian territory.⁽¹⁾ This head is the Catholicos, and his see is at the convent of Etchmiadzin, ceded to Russia in 1828. The Catholicos is, in fact, a Russian dignitary, whose appointment, proposed by the bishops and Armenians of all countries, is subject to the sanction of the Emperor of Russia. He discharges his functions with the assistance of a Synod or Council, in the election of which the Imperial authority also interferes. Now, the dignity of these functions is such that they raise the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin even above the Armenian Patriarchs of Constantinople, Jerusalem, and Sis.⁽²⁾ He alone has the power of conferring episcopal consecration and blessing the holy oil. "It is," says Mr. Broussali, "this exclusive right of the Pontiff of Etchmiadzin which makes the unity of the Armenian Church, sustains its moral force, and preserves the nationality of the people by unity of religion."⁽³⁾

(1) It is the orthodox Armenian Church that is referred to here, the separate existence of which dates back as far as the sixth century. The vast majority of Armenians still belong to this Church, which is also called Gregorian, after St. Gregory, the Illuminator, an Armenian apostle. There is, however, at Constantinople, in addition to the orthodox Armenian Patriarch, a Catholic Armenian Patriarch, head of the United Armenians, owning allegiance to the Pope. Mr. Engelhardt (*La Turquie et le Tanzimat*, vol. ii., page 58) estimates the number of the latter at 150,000, divided since 1867 into Hassounites and Kupelianists, the latter dissenting from Rome, but officially recognised as Catholics in Turkey. There are also in Asia Minor a pretty large number of Protestant missions, mostly American, whose Armenian converts are estimated by Mr. Broussali at about 20,000.

(2) From a dogmatic point of view, the title of Patriarch, which is borne by the Armenian Archbishops of Constantinople and Sis, is simply honorary. From a civil point of view, the Patriarch of Constantinople represents the Armenian nation at the seat of Turkish Government, and is the head of the National Assembly. "He must be consecrated by the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin, or accepted by him as a bishop, and a subject of the Ottoman Empire." (Article 115 of the Armenian National Constitution. Broussali, *ibid*, page 217.)

(3) Broussali, *l.c.*—It is interesting to compare these observations with what Gibbon wrote in the last century on the position of the Armenian Church. "Under the rod of oppression, the zeal of the Armenians is fervent and intrepid; they have often preferred the crown of martyrdom to the white turban of Mahomet; they devoutly hate the error and the idolatry of the Greeks; and their transient union with the Latins is not less devoid of truth than the thousand bishops, whom their Patriarch offered at the feet of the Roman Pontiff. The Catholic, or Patriarch, of the Armenians resides in the monastery of Ekmiasin, three leagues from Erivan. Forty-seven archbishops, each of whom may claim the obedience of four or five suffragans, are consecrated by his hand; but the far greater part are only titular prelates, who dignify with their presence and service the simplicity of his court. As soon as they have performed liturgy, they cultivate the garden; and our bishops will hear with surprise that the austerity of their life increases in just proportion to the elevation of their rank. In the

Is it necessary to show the advantage which, in certain eventualities, the Russian Government might derive from this state of things? Fortunately for Turkey, but unfortunately for the Armenians, Russia does not hitherto appear to have perceived that the most skilful and just policy for her to adopt would be to respect the individuality of the Armenian Church, and the independence of its head. It should be the aim of Turkey to turn this error to account, and to convince the Armenians that if their Catholicos felt himself seriously threatened in the discharge of his spiritual functions, he would find in the Ottoman possessions a safer asylum than at Etchmiadzin. Then might we see, as in former times, the Armenian Pope transfer the see of his pontificate to Aghtamar or Sis. Although the conduct of the Czar's Government towards its subjects is not dependent on agreements or international law, the Russian Administration is too clear-sighted not to perceive how prejudicial the displacement of the religious centre of an entire Christian population would be to its Asiatic policy.

What is the number of this population? The exact data are wanting, and it is very difficult to obtain even approximate particulars on the subject. According to the last general census, which was taken as far back as 1844, the total number of Armenian *Ottoman subjects* amounted at that time to 2,400,000, of which there were 400,000 in Europe, and two millions in Asia. This number, which is adopted by Ubicini,⁽¹⁾ of course includes the Armenian inhabitants of the districts of Ardahan, Kars, and Batoum, which were ceded to Russia in 1878; but, irrespective of this, there are many reasons for thinking that it falls short of the truth. As Mr. Broussali observes, "the subjects of the Sultan are always afraid that a census is a pretext for establishing a basis for the assessment of a new tax, and in order to secure their immunity they conceal their real number. It is owing to the influence of these fears that the Armenians dare not reveal their exact number even to their own Patriarch. Another

fourscore thousand towns or villages of his spiritual empire, the Patriarch receives a small and voluntary tax from each person above the age of fifteen; but the annual amount of six hundred thousand crowns is insufficient to supply the incessant demands of charity and tribute. Since the beginning of the last century the Armenians have obtained a large and lucrative share of the commerce of the East; in their return from Europe, the caravan usually halts in the neighbourhood of Erivan, the altars are enriched with the fruits of their patient industry; and the faith of Eutyches is preached in their recent congregations of Barbary and Poland." (*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. xlvii.)

(¹) Ubicini, *Lettres sur la Turquie*, vol. ii.

cause of error, which is also the result of fear of the Turk, lies in the fact that many Armenians place themselves under the protection of the various Consuls, in order to benefit by the 'capitulations,' an easy matter in Turkey, and which can always be arranged by means of money. Further, the statistical statement of 1845 does not take into account a large number of Armenian villages, situated in the mountainous regions in which at that time the Kurds did not allow the Government agents to enter."⁽¹⁾

Two statistical accounts of Armenian origin, which I have before me and which were communicated to the Berlin Congress, with a letter from the President of the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, estimate the number of Armenians settled on Ottoman territory, within the limits defined by the Treaty of San Stefano, that is to say, without the so-called region of Alashkerd and Bajazid (9,600 square kilometres), restored by the Treaty of Berlin, at three millions. These three millions of Armenian Ottoman subjects, are distributed as follows: 400,000 at Constantinople and in the Balkan peninsula, 600,000 in Asia Minor and in the peninsula of Cilicia, 670,000 in Armenia Minor (the vilayet of Sivas and the sanjaks of Kaïsseri), and 1,330,000 in Turkish Major Armenia, which includes the vilayets of Erzeroum and Van, the northern portion of the vilayet of Diarbekir, sandjak of Argana, and the northern portion of the sanjak of Seghert.⁽²⁾ The following considerations advanced in support of these figures will, I think, interest the reader:—

"European travellers who habitually visit the Balkan peninsula and the West of Asia Minor are apt to believe, and to spread the idea, that the Armenians whom they meet with more or less everywhere are scattered over the entire area of the Ottoman empire. It is an error. The great mass still occupy the soil of their ancient country. Nevertheless, we must not judge from the great urban agglomerations, just as we get a very wrong estimate of the population of the island of Crete from the figures arrived at if only the principal towns, where the Moslems predominate, were taken as a basis, or if the population of Bulgaria and Herzegovina were gauged by that of Adrianople, Rustzuk, and Mostar.

(1) *Revue française*, vol. iii., page 517.

(2) It is well known that, in accordance with the Turkish Vilayet Act of 1864, the province (vilayet), at the head of which is the *vali* or governor, is divided into districts (hundreds), administered by Mutessarifs, the sandjaks into cantons or cazas, ruled by kams, and the cazas into communes, the rulers of which are called Mouktars.

“It is also an ascertained fact that in Armenia, as in many other parts of Turkey, the proportion of Christians and Moslems has enormously changed since 1845. Whilst the Christian population is increasing every year, following a more or less rapid rate of progression, a movement in the contrary direction is taking place amongst the Mussulmans. The causes of this decline are manifold :—

1st. The military conscription.

2nd. The flocking of Mussulmans to the towns.

3rd. Their emigration to the capital or elsewhere to enter the service of Turkish officials, or to earn their livelihood in all sorts of ways.

“ . . . It is also worthy of note that a portion of the Moslems who inhabit Armenia are of Armenian origin. These in many localities have preserved the manners, the language, and customs of their race, and some are not infrequently met with who are still designated by the names of their fathers or Armenian ancestors: Margos-Oglou Mustapha, Der-⁽¹⁾ Kirkor-Oglou Mehemed. It is the same with the Kurds who have a fixed residence in Armenia. The appellations of the ancient Armenian families of Mamkonian, Mantagouni, Selgouni, and Rechdouni are easily recognisable in the names Mamketzi, Mentekli, Slivantzi, and Rochgountzi. Many of them observe a great number of Christian usages, and cannot be considered Mahometans.”

The following figures, taken from the same accounts, show further the distribution of the different races in Major Turkish Armenia as constituted by the Treaty of San Stefano :—

Vilayets of Erzeroum and Van.

Armenians	1,150,000
Turks	400,000
Nomad Kurds	80,000
Greeks	5,000
Syrians	14,000
Zazas ⁽²⁾	35,000
Yesidis ⁽³⁾	13,000
Kintchoucs ⁽⁴⁾	3,000
Total	1,700,000

(¹) Der signifies abbot; as everybody knows, the priests composing the Secular Armenian clergy are married, according to the ancient usage of the Church.

(²) Also called Dembeliks, savage tribes with a dialect and religion of their own.

(³) Sun-worshippers, the greater part nomad, speaking a dialect of their own.

(⁴) Species of nomad Tzigans.

Northern portion of the vilayet of Diarbekir.

Armenians	180,000
Turks	130,000
Kurds	40,000
Syrians	8,000
Zazas	2,300
Yesidis	2,000
Total	362,300

Summary.

Armenians	1,330,000
Turks	530,000
Kurds	120,000
Various races.....	82,300
Total	2,062,300

Mr. Broussali thinks he may put the total number of Armenians at 3,800,000 instead of 3,000,000. I am inclined to believe that this is a patriotic delusion, and that it is safer to adhere to the number given to the Berlin Congress. But this modest computation already represents nearly one-seventh of the total population of the immediate possessions of Turkey,⁽¹⁾ and nearly one-fifth of her immediate possessions in Asia.⁽²⁾

There remain the Armenians collected or scattered in countries other than Turkey. The Russian almanac *Tongo-Azovsgli* for 1887, estimates the number of those who inhabit Russia, the Crimea, Poland, the Caucasian provinces, and the territories of Ardahan, Kars, and Batoum (annexed in 1878) at 1,807,907. Adding this number to those of the Armenians settled in Persia (from 200,000 to 225,000), India, Java, or China (40,000), Austro-Hungary (30,000), in the East and West of Europe, America, and Africa (97,000), Mr. Broussali arrives at a total of about 2,200,000 Armenians settled outside the Turkish Empire. That is far from constituting, for the Ottoman Empire itself, a factor which can be ignored. Although the Armenians who fall within this category have nothing to fear or to hope from Turkey for themselves, the greater part, and especially the richest and best educated, have preserved at the bottom of their hearts, like those merchants of whom Gibbon⁽³⁾ spoke, the memory and the love of the cradle of their race. Many are able to influence the opinion of the European public and Governments in the

(¹) *Almanach de Gotha* for 1889, 21,633,000 (including the vilayet of Tripoli). "Statesman's Year Book," 22,723,900.

(²) *Almanach de Gotha* and "Statesman's Year Book, 1889," 16,133,000.

(³) See foregoing note.

direction of their national aspirations, for the success of which they are ready to make the greatest sacrifices.

Having thus shown by facts and figures the great importance of the Armenian question, I shall now consider this question itself from the point of view of international law. I shall in turn examine, firstly, the legal and actual position of Armenia and the Armenians of Turkey under the Treaty of Paris of 1856; secondly, their legal position under the Treaties of San Stefano and Berlin, and under the Anglo-Turkish Convention of 4th June, 1878; and thirdly, their actual position since these Treaties. Such will be the subjects of Chapters II., III., and IV. of this work. Chapter V. will give the conclusions to be drawn from them.

CHAPTER II.—ARMENIA AND THE ARMENIANS OF TURKEY UNDER THE TREATY OF PARIS OF 1856.

CONTENTS.—The Treaty of Paris, in spite of its disclaimers, itself sanctioned the right of Europe to interfere collectively in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire—Europe could and should have attended to the accomplishment of the promises of reform of which she had taken note—This consequence applies to the Armenians as well as to the Greeks and Bulgarians—Nevertheless the Great Powers, who interested themselves on behalf of the Christians of European Turkey and those of Lebanon, have done nothing for those of Armenia—Why?—Revision of the laws relating to the Christian communities in 1860-1862—The “National Constitution” of the Armenians—Analysis and criticism of this document—Is it a Constitution?—Composition of the General Assembly—Its powers—The Councils—The Patriarch—Article 8 of the Constitution; relations of the National Government with the Sublime Porte—Right of complaint—Inquiry and report of 1871—Procedure—Results—Measures proposed—Report of 1876—Some examples—Scene of fanaticism—An official assassin; Christian evidence rejected—Decisions of the superior authorities defied by the local authorities—Lands belonging to Christians wrongfully occupied by Mussulmans—Extent of these usurpations—Plundering by Kurds—Nothing gained when a Christian wins a lawsuit—The principle of collective intervention, nascent in the Treaty of Paris, makes progress—Vain promises of the Porte—Imperial Hatt of 10th September, 1876—Ottoman Constitution—The war—The Treaty of San Stefano.

THE Treaty of Paris does not expressly sanction any right of interference on the part of Europe in the internal affairs of Turkey. Its avowed aim is “to secure, through effectual and reciprocal guarantees, the



independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire.”⁽¹⁾ In the course of the Treaty, immediately after referring to the famous Hatti-Houmayoun of 18th February, 1856, in which the Sultan promised to secure the happiness of his subjects,⁽²⁾ the Powers add that this “communication cannot in any case give them the right to interfere, either collectively or separately, in the relations of His Majesty the Sultan with his subjects, nor in the internal administration of his Empire.”

Alas for the irony of events! In spite of this solemn declaration, the Treaty of Paris exactly marks the date since which the integrity of the Ottoman Empire has received the most serious blows, whilst its internal affairs, its finances, its institutions have become the objects of collective and systematic interference on the part of the Great Powers. We thus not infrequently see, both in the history of public law and that of our humble daily existence, the best instruments prepared by the most skilful hands produce results diametrically opposite to what their authors expected from them.

I have elsewhere explained how the express disclaimer of the Powers Signatories to the Treaty of Paris of all idea of intervention met with

(¹) Terms of the preamble to the Treaty.

(²) In saying that the Sultan promised “to secure the happiness of his subjects” I exaggerate nothing. Here is the text of this Hatti-Houmayoun, as pompously misleading as the Hatti-Sherif of 1839, as the Ottoman Constitution of 1876, or as all the legislative and financial paper with which the Porte has been attempting for fifty years to satisfy its creditors and its subjects:—

“Most noble and eminent Minister, most glorious and worthy *Mushir*, ruler and organiser of peoples, our present Grand Vizir, &c., &c. . . . Know, on receipt of this Imperial rescript, that the happiness of all the peoples that Providence has deigned to entrust to my charge being the most cherished and constant of my preoccupations, the entire universe has been able to see since my accession, thanks be to God, the fruits of my solicitude in this respect. Nevertheless wishing to give a wider extension as well as a fresh sanction to the new régime, *Tanzimati-Khairie*, which I have had the happiness to establish, so as to arrive at a state of things in conformity both with the dignity of my Government and the eminent position which it occupies amongst civilised nations;

“On the other hand, considering that the august rights of my crown have just received at home, thanks to the assistance of the Most High, a fresh sanction, in consequence of the praiseworthy efforts of my faithful subjects of all classes, and as well as of the solicitude and generous aid of the Great Powers, my noble allies; considering, therefore, that this epoch is the commencement of a new era of prosperity, the generous feelings that I profess for my people make it my duty to promote also at home and by every possible means the development of the strength, the power, and the prosperity of the country, and thus to make my subjects of every class happy, united amongst themselves by the bonds of a cordial patriotism, as they are all equal in the eyes of my eager and fatherly solicitude;

“For these reasons we have commanded, and command as follows: . . . ”

such prompt and emphatic disavowals at the hands of these very Powers themselves.⁽¹⁾ It was, in the full force of the term, a *protestatio actui contraria*. On the first occasion it was a disavowal of the very object of the clause where it was inserted, since this object was to recognise the promises of reform made by Turkey.⁽²⁾ Another disavowal lay in the fact that the firman which contained these promises was the joint work of Turkish Ministers and of the English, Austrian, and French Ambassadors.⁽³⁾ And even if it had been otherwise, there was still no Power, nor any combination of Powers, strong enough to obliterate with a stroke of the pen the actual relations between Turkey and her allies which had been revealed by the Crimean War, to replace inequality by equality, and conditional protection by reciprocal independence.

It follows, therefore, that the Armenians, as well as the other Christian populations of the Empire, were entitled from 1856 to consider the Sultan's promises of reform at the very least implicitly guaranteed by Europe, and that the latter, from the very fact of its having saved the Turkish Empire from ruin or dissolution, had not only acquired the right, but contracted the obligation to secure for the Armenians, as well as the Greeks and Bulgarians, the accomplishment of these promises. It thus turned out that the Treaty of Paris contained the germ of the entire situation, which was subsequently to dictate the expressly protective stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin, and which in the interval brought about and justified the numerous interferences of the European Powers in the internal affairs of Turkey.

(1) See Rolin-Jaequemyns, *Le droit international et la question d'Orient*, Ghent, 1876, pp. 31-37, and *Revue de Droit international*, vol. viii. Cf. Engelhardt, *La Turquie et le Tanzimat*, Paris, 1882, vol. i., pp. 143, 144, and 154. I shall have to quote more than once from the excellent work of Mr. Engelhardt, who was aided in the formation of an unbiased and dispassionate opinion by his diplomatic experience and his perfect knowledge of Eastern affairs.

(2) Let us remember the text of Clause 9 of the Treaty of Paris: "His Imperial Majesty the Sultan having, in his constant solicitude for the welfare of his subjects, issued a firman which, while ameliorating their condition, without distinction of religion or of race, records his generous intentions towards the Christian populations of his Empire, and wishing to give a further proof of his sentiments in this respect, has resolved to communicate to the contracting parties the said firman, emanating spontaneously from his sovereign will. The contracting Powers recognise the high value of this communication. It is clearly understood that it cannot in any case give the right to the said Powers to interfere, either collectively or separately, in the relations of His Majesty the Sultan with his subjects, nor in the internal administration of his Empire."

(3) Rolin-Jaequemyns, *l.c.*, page 37. Engelhardt, pp. 130-138, narrates these events very accurately.

Such is the law. Numerous documents, emanating from the Powers themselves, give expression to it, at first discreetly, then more and more boldly, from the colourless memorandum of 5th October, 1859,⁽¹⁾ to the Protocol of London of 31st March, 1877⁽²⁾: "The Powers that have undertaken to pacify the East"—this is how the Protocol is expressed—"recognise that the surest means of attaining the object they have set before them is, above all, to maintain the understanding so happily existing among them, and to jointly re-affirm the common interest which they take in the promotion of the rights of the Christian populations of Turkey, and in the reforms to be effected in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria, which the Porte has accepted, reserving it to herself to carry them out. . . . The Powers intend to carefully observe, by the medium of their representatives at Constantinople and their local agents, the manner in which the promises of the Ottoman Government are kept. If their hopes should be once again deceived, and the condition of the Sultan's subjects not be improved, so as to prevent a return of the complications which periodically trouble the repose of the East, they think it their duty to declare that such a state of things would be incompatible with their interests and those of Europe in general. *In such a contingency they reserve to themselves the joint consideration of the means they consider the best adapted to ensure the welfare of the Christian populations and the interests of general peace.*"

Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria did not occupy any privileged place in the Treaty of 1856. They were not even mentioned in it, nor yet Crete or Lebanon. Why, then, did Europe actively interest herself even before 1878 on behalf of the Christian populations of these countries? and why has she advanced no claim on behalf of the Christians of Armenia? Unfortunately I can only find one explanation of this differential treatment: it is because the Armenians, instead of revolting, have only complained. Doubtless this explanation is not very flattering to European diplomacy. But I see no other. In point of fact, the Christians of

(1) The representatives of the Powers there express regret to see that Turkey does not help herself, that she does not commence a gradual and steady execution of the reforms, and that a sufficient impulse is not shown for the attainment of the object indicated by the Firman of 1856 (Engelhardt, *ibid.*, vol. i., page 161).

(2) In the third of my essays on the Eastern Question (*Revue de Droit international et de Législation comparée*, vol. x., 1878, page 13 and following ones), I have criticised this protocol on account of the delusions which at that decisive moment European diplomacy still appeared to have cherished as regards the real intentions of the Porte. But these delusions only render the affirmation of the right of interference by the Powers more noteworthy.

Armenia were—and the Governments of the Great Powers could not but now it—as ill-treated under the Turkish régime, and even before 1878, as were the Bosnians, the Herzegovinians, and the Bulgarians. Like these, they were taxable and workable at their lord's will and pleasure; neither their persons nor their property were protected from the tyranny and extortions of the Imperial officials, from the venality and ignorance of the judges, or from the partiality shown by both for the Mussulmans. To all these inflictions must be added, particularly as regards the Armenians, the tyranny of the Kurdish Beys, and the depredations of the Tcherkesses and nomad Kurds. The victims of this oppression would not even have had the means of making their sufferings known if the civil and religious leaders and representatives of the Armenian nation at Constantinople had not taken the cause of their countrymen and co-religionists in hand. Reports of the inquiries, conducted in 1871 and 1876 by the General Assembly of the Armenian community, have been published under the supervision of the Armenian Patriarch at Constantinople.⁽¹⁾ Before summarising this "specification" of a people's lamentations and wishes, I will say a few words about the singular organisation which allowed it to make itself heard, but not to obtain justice.

As is well known, the principle in Turkey of the organisation of non-Mussulman religious communities dates from the conquest. The conquering Turks were not slow to perceive that, instead of exterminating the vanquished, it was better to let them live like productive flocks.⁽²⁾ Ignorant or reckless of what these dogs of infidel Greeks, Armenians, or Jews were doing among themselves, the Osmanlis were content to feed on their marrow, levying on them the capitation tribute or tax called *Karatch*, stealing the flower of their youth for the Seraglio or the harems, and not scrupling to confiscate the property of those who appeared to them to be growing too rich.⁽³⁾ Politics and war having become the

(1) Official publications of the Armenian Patriarchate at Constantinople. *Rapports sur l'oppression des Arméniens en Arménie et dans les autres provinces de la Turquie*, laid before the National Armenian Assembly by the Committee of Inquiry appointed for this purpose. London: Gilbert and Rivington, 1877, in 8vo., 64 pages.

(2) The word *raia* literally signifies flock.

(3) The story of the Greek, Michel Cantacuzeno, is still celebrated. He lived at Constantinople, had made an immense fortune in business, and built a beautiful house for himself at Achilo. It is said that when he used to pass through the town, mounted on his mule, six servants ran before him and a seventh followed him. To ingratiate himself with the Sultan, he presented him in 1571 with fifteen galleys. This liberality did not prevent the Commander of the Faithful from sending him one day his *Kapidschi baschi*. The unfortunate man was hanged before the entrance to his own palace. (Ranke, *Die Osmanen*.)

appanage of the conquerors, all that remained to the subject races of their national individuality concentrated itself in their religious life. Little by little the religious communities, whether Christian or Israelite, acquired in the administration of their churches, their schools, their hospitals, and their charitable institutions, a sort of civil, and even political, independence. Subsequently, when the decline of the Turkish Empire favoured ideas of emancipation, it was in the shadow of the altar that they first sprang into life.

This state of things did not fail to make the more far-seeing amongst the Turks uneasy, and they endeavoured to profit by the opportunity which was afforded them by the Hatti-Houmayoun of 1856 to restrict under the pretext of revision and reforms, an autonomy which they considered inconvenient. The Christian communities strongly protested. Another movement had, moreover, sprung up amongst them. The lay element claimed a more extensive share in the administration of the common patrimony. The revision of the ancient privileges ended in 1862, after many difficulties and discussions, in a new regulation of the Greek Armenian and Israelite communities. We can only notice here the document called *National Armenian Constitution*.⁽¹⁾ Let us, first, consider the title. It appears very pretentious. The designation of "statute," or "regulations of the Armenian community," would have more accurately represented the object of the document, which, after all, only aims at the organisation of a half civil, half religious society, whose powers stop precisely where those of a real State commence. I am inclined to believe that this pompous and misleading title is not the result of mere error. The Turkish Government, in adopting it, was faithful to its system, which consists of putting magnificent labels such as constitution, reform, &c., on empty boxes. On their part the Armenians of Constantinople, who drew up the "National Constitution," were perhaps not sorry to magnify its real purport.

I am confirmed in this opinion, because in the entire document a similar disproportion is noticeable between words and things. In appearance these 150 Articles form a complete constitutional edifice.

(1) The "National Armenian Constitution" is drawn up in the popular Armenian tongue called Constantinople. A French translation, owing to M. E. Prud'homme, appeared in the *Revue de l'Orient de l'Algérie et des Colonies*. (Paris. July and August issues, 1862.) It is to this translation I shall refer.

constructed after the manner of our modern democratic charters—fine preamble, with fundamental principles,⁽¹⁾ central and provincial government, local assemblies of the representatives of the nation, local assemblies of representatives of districts and dioceses, national Councils entrusted with the superintendence of public education, administration, finance, and justice; regulations concerning the electorate and eligibility for election, mode of election, the discipline of the assemblies, and even the method of altering the constitution,—everything is in it, except any provision of which an Armenian can avail himself to prevent the Kurd from stealing his sheep, the Bey from violating his daughter and stealing his land, the tax collector from claiming from him payment of the same tax two or three times over,—everything, except further provision which would serve as an efficient curb to the tyranny of the Turkish Government or rouse it from its inactivity. In other words, no proper nor

(1) These principles are as follows. I leave the reader the task of disentangling from among these declarations, some of which are too vague and others too absolute, those that are really good and practical, as, for instance, the duty of Government to promote education :—

1. Every person belonging to the nation has duties to perform to the nation. The latter has, on the other hand, duties to perform to every person belonging to it. Moreover, each person holds rights from his nation, and the nation from each person. The power which defines these duties is called National Government. By special privilege the Ottoman Porte grants the National Government the administration of the internal affairs of the Armenians of Turkey.

2. The National Government is based on the principle of right and duty, which are the foundations of justice; its strength consists of the majority of votes, which is the foundation of legitimacy. Every national act which is not in conformity with these principles is neither just nor legitimate.

3. The nation and its Government are bound to each other by reciprocal duties.

4. The duties of the subjects are to contribute each his share, according to the extent of his means, to the expenditure required for the nation's necessities; to be ready to provide the nation with the services she claims, and to submit through love for her to the acts of the National Government.

5. The duties of the National Government are to provide for the moral, intellectual, and physical wants of the nation, to maintain unshaken the creed and traditions of the holy Armenian Church, to diffuse equally amongst children of both sexes, without distinction of station, instruction in the branches of knowledge indispensable to mankind; to preserve the splendour of the national institutions; to increase, by legal means the revenue of the nation, and regulate the expenditure with wisdom; to improve the position and ensure the future of those who devote themselves permanently to the service of the nation; to take fatherly care of the indigent, to equitably adjust disputes arising between subjects, and to spare no trouble for the prosperity and advancement of the nation.

practical guarantee can anywhere be found of the collective rights of the nation, or of the individual rights of its members.⁽¹⁾

Another striking feature in this "Constitution" is that, in spite of its parade of democratic and representative principles, it appears specially intended to organise the representation of the Armenians of Constantinople. In fact, out of 220 elective members of the General Assembly of the nation, 160 are elected by the churches of the wards of Constantinople, whilst, as we saw, there are only 400,000 Armenians in the whole of Turkey in Europe, as against at least 2,600,000 in Asiatic Turkey! Let me add that, according to a table published with the Constitution in the *Revue de l'Orient*, 1862, pages 106, 107, a very small minority of the representatives of the provinces belong to Armenia, properly so called—that is to say, to the most densely populated districts. That is not all. There are members by privilege, who in the nature of things must be an immense majority of the Armenians resident at Constantinople. These are the members of the Central Assemblies, both civil and religious, of the Central Councils of Superintendence, the Presidents of the Councils of the twenty-four Armenian wards of the capital, the bishops residing at Constantinople, all the preachers (vartabeds, members of the black clergy) and the parish priests of the Constantinople churches, the managing newspaper editors, the upper officials, the members of the Imperial Societies, the directors and head interpreters of the Chanceries of the Sublime Porte, the managers of National or Imperial establishments, and, to crown all, superior officers (Article 9). The number of all these members by privilege is limited to 180 (Article 10). But it is not stated how the selection will be made among the classes indicated, in case the

(1) The inquiries which were held in 1871 and 1876 by the General Assembly of the Armenian community, and which will be referred to subsequently, show that there is no exaggeration in this criticism. "We shall be asked," says the report on the inquiry of 1876, page 11, "what the communal and provincial Councils are doing in Armenia? We reply that these Councils only exist as shadows. Even the bishops cannot intercede with the Turkish authorities on behalf of their flocks. . . . The influence of the local Councils of the community does not sensibly differ from that of the bishops. The Governors of the vilayets, who, for the most part, are ignorant and overbearing, care nothing for these National Councils, which are nevertheless formed in accordance with the organic regulations of the community sanctioned by the Government. . . . The bishops and national Councils have, therefore, no means of obtaining justice except through the medium of the Patriarchate of Constantinople; consequently, it is there they send their complaints in shoals. The Patriarch can do nothing but forward *takrirs* to the Porte." (Subsequently, on page 16, it is stated that these *takrirs* produce no effect.)

number of persons who are included in them should exceed the latter number.

According to Article 11, it is through the National Assembly, as thus composed, that "the nation exercises its power." According to the same Article, the powers of the National Assembly consist in selecting the upper officials of the nation, instituting a National Religious Assembly for religious matters, and a National Civil Assembly for civil matters, receiving the accounts of their administration, and settling without appeal the important and general affairs of the nation. Further, in accordance with Article 12, the General Assembly takes part in the election of the Catholicos. Finally, it elects the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem, decides the differences which arise between the civil and religious Assemblies, between the Patriarch and the Assemblies, and revises the Constitution.

The Religious Assembly is composed of "fourteen learned ecclesiastics" (Article 20), and the Civil Assembly of "twenty lay members, well versed in civil matters" (Article 27). Mixed affairs are entrusted by the General Assembly to a composite Assembly formed of the two preceding ones (Article 1). There are also four National Boards of Superintendence, each consisting of ten members: namely, a Board of Public Education,⁽¹⁾ a Board of Administration, a Board of Finance, and

(¹) The following provisions relating to the Board of Public Education are worthy of note:—
Article 33.—The Board of Public Education is composed of ten laymen engaged in teaching.

Article 34.—The powers of the Board of Public Education consist of the general supervision of public education. Its mission is to attend to the good organisation of the national schools; to draw up a general programme of national education and school regulations; to establish in the national schools, in conformity with the said regulations, a uniform course of both study and teaching; to promote the study of elementary knowledge; to attend specially to the education of girls; to aid and encourage societies founded for this purpose; to take steps to improve the position and ensure the future of the national schoolmasters; to grant promotion to able schoolmasters, and distribute select classical books in the schools.

Article 35.—The Board of Public Education must, as far as it is concerned, use every effort to establish, both at Constantinople and in the provinces, elementary schools in every district, and a national college for classical studies at Constantinople and in all towns where there is a resident *ar'adschnort* (that is to say, the head of a Provincial Government). Certificates will be granted by this college to pupils who have completed their studies, and teachers' diplomas to those who have made special studies.

Article 36.—The Board of Public Education selects the classical books and teaching staff of the colleges. But as regards religious instruction, the selection of books and teachers will be left to the Religious Assembly.

Article 37.—The Board of Public Education will preside at the annual examination of the national colleges; the examination in religious instruction will be conducted by the Religious Assembly.

a Board of Justice (Article 2). All the members of the first three Boards must be laymen (Articles 33, 38, 51); the Board of Justice is composed of five ecclesiastics and five laymen (Article 56).

District Boards have been formed at Constantinople for the management of local business and institutions (Articles 2 and 61).

The Provincial Government is modelled on the Central Government (Article 5).

The official head of the National Government is the Patriarch of Constantinople, and the head-quarters the patriarchal palace in the same city (Article 3). The Patriarch is elected by the General Assembly (Article 12), consecrated by the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin (Article 115), and appointed by the Sublime Porte (Article 117).

Before being presented to the Sublime Porte, the new Patriarch takes oath of fidelity to the National Constitution (Article 118). If he commits a violation of the Constitution he is impeached (Article 119). This impeachment can only be undertaken by the national representatives, the Religious or the Civil Assembly. If the General Assembly, after hearing the report of a Committee of Inquiry, containing only seven ecclesiastics out of twenty-one members, decides that the impeachment is proved, the result of the vote, signed by all those who have taken part in the ballot, is notified to the Patriarch. The latter, says Article 120, "on seeing the expression of the national will, is bound to give in his resignation." After his resignation the Patriarch takes rank with the diocesan bishops (Article 126).

It is impossible to conceal from one's self that the working of all this complicated mechanism must, after all, always depend on the goodwill of the Porte, the sole possessor of public power. On the other hand, it is inevitable that among so many Boards and Assemblies there should arise dissensions and differences calculated to weaken rather than strengthen the national cause. Must it, then, be said that the organisation whose principal features we have just sketched is useless? Far be it from me to make such an assertion. It is a great deal to have, face to face with the masters at home and public opinion abroad, an organisation, however imperfect, however remote it may be; and if the Armenians of Armenia only occupy a small space on the benches of the National Assembly, their complaints must none the less find an echo in the hearts of their brethren in Constantinople, or of such a patriarch as Nercès was. This is what

has happened, thanks to one of the apparently vaguest and least important articles of the Constitution.

Article 8 of the Constitution says :—

“The relations of the National Government with the nation, with the metropolis of Ararad, with the Sublime Porte, will be based on the following principles :

“To always behave paternally towards the nation and its inhabitants.

“With the metropolis of Ararad, to faithfully observe the traditions which since the days of our forefathers have bound the nation and the metropolis to each other.

“With the Sublime Porte, to claim the protection of the Empire for the maintenance of the religious and civil rights, both of the nation and the people, and to faithfully preserve the obedience of the nation to the Empire.

“The Patriarch is the intermediary of these relations.”

The provisions in italics, whilst illustrating the humble and dependent position of the Armenian nation, give it at least a right which the oppressed do not always possess—the right of complaint. This right entails, as a necessary consequence, upon the official representatives of the oppressed a right of inquiry. The Armenian National Assembly acted, therefore, with perfect regularity when, in 1871, observing the inefficacy of isolated complaints and representations, it appointed a Commission for the purpose of—firstly, investigating and pointing out the abuses and extortions to which the Christian populations of Armenia are subjected ; and secondly, to propose the necessary measures to put an end to this state of things.

The Commission was composed of eight members—four ecclesiastics and four laymen. It was presided over by the eminent Bishop of Nicomedia, Monseigneur Nercès, who was afterwards Patriarch of Constantinople.⁽¹⁾

The Commission of Inquiry had resort to two methods :—

1st. It examined the archives of the Patriarchate, in order to get full information as to the nature of the complaints received from the provinces during the past twenty years, and to ascertain in what way the Central Administration had endeavoured to remedy this state of things.

(1) Report of 8/20 October, 1871, page 4.

2nd. It sent to all the diocesan bishops of Armenia a circular, requesting them to answer as accurately as possible the following questions :

(a) What are the evils from which the populations of your diocese are suffering? To what kinds of exactions are they subjected, and what are the causes of them?

(b) By what means could these sufferings be obviated?

The examination of the archives of the Patriarchate showed that, irrespective of a quantity of *takrirs* or complaints, the object of which consisted in drawing attention in a general way to the existence of abuses common to all the provinces, and the means of remedying them; the *takrirs* in which the Patriarchate had been for twenty years specifying the special facts which had come to its knowledge, and for which it had asked justice of the Porte, could be classed as follows :

(a) Against the abuses committed in the assessment and collection of taxes	76
(b) Against the abuses by Government officials—enforced conversion of women and minors to Islamism	154
(c) Against the outrages, plunderings, abductions of young girls and women, hindrances to the building of churches and the use of bells, obstacles to burials and other religious ceremonies	249
Total.....	479

The same examination showed that on receiving these documents the Porte had sent orders to the Imperial authorities in the provinces, but that these orders had had no practical effect.⁽¹⁾

The grievances described in the answers to the interrogatory of the Commission were classed by the latter in four categories, namely :

- (a) Abuses in the assessment and collection of taxes.
- (b) Abuses committed by public officials.
- (c) Non-acceptance of the evidence of Christians.
- (d) Depredations of the Kurds, &c.

This work would be of a disproportionate length if I followed the report into the details of the revolting deeds which it denounces. It might, moreover, be objected that these deeds took place prior to the Berlin Treaty, and we shall have subsequently to inquire what the present state

(¹) Report, *ibid*, page 16.

of things is under the operation of that Treaty. Let us, therefore, confine ourselves to summing up the principal means which the Commission of 1870 proposed for the remedy of these abuses. Even from this enumeration we shall see what was the nature of the abuses, and also the moderation, generally speaking, of the demands of the Armenians.

(a) Remedies Proposed for the Abuses in the Assessment and Collection of Taxes.

1st. Instead of exemption from military service by payment of the exemption tax called *bédélié*, apply the recruiting law to the Armenians themselves.⁽¹⁾

2nd. Make a fresh public numbering for the assessment of the *emlak* (land tax) and *témettu* (tax on profits), and cancel the arrears of this class of taxes, on account of the irregularities committed in the *tahrir* (return).

3rd. Have the taxes collected direct, instead of farming them. This complaint is of frequent recurrence. Scarcely 50 per cent. of the sums collected by the *multézims* (farmers) reaches the Treasury.

(b) Abuses Committed by Public Officials—Remedies Proposed.

1st. "The majority of the officials, being devoid of all knowledge of the laws and administrative science, themselves commit breaches of the law. . . . They profit by the ignorance of the inhabitants or the connivance of the *tchorbadji* (notables) to grind and oppress the people." The Government ought to send Commissioners into the provinces *ad hoc*, invested with full powers, in order to maintain relations with men of all classes, and to closely examine the state of the vilayet. It ought to dismiss and punish officials who have been found guilty, and not merely transfer them from one province to another.

2nd. To thoroughly reform the *medjlissi tefrik* (local administrative councils), which, as at present organised, only serve the interests of the *tchorbadjis* (notables).

3rd. When, after a *tahrir* from the Patriarchate, the Governor of a vilayet resorts to intrigue to clear himself, send to the provinces Com-

⁽¹⁾ In some provinces the military exemption tax was even claimed for old men and newly-born male children.

missions invested with full powers; and if it should be felt to be necessary, summon both sides to Constantinople.

4th. Get the orders executed which the Sublime Porte sends to the Governors concerning the complaints of the Christians; have these orders published in the official newspaper of the vilayet; have the *Destour*, or collection of Ottoman laws, translated into Armenian.

5th. Order those who embrace Islamism to be placed for at least three days under the care of their ecclesiastical authority; compel those who change their religion to provide for the maintenance of their original wives and children.

(c) Proposed Remedy for the Non-acceptance of Christian Evidence.

Civil, commercial, and criminal cases should come within the jurisdiction of the civil courts (Nizamieh) instead of being tried by the Sheri courts.⁽¹⁾

(d) Depredations of the Kurds, &c.—Proposed Remedies.

1st. The Kurds and other mountain races, to which in recent years the Tcherkesses have been added, are a regular scourge to the Armenian population, and they constitute a perpetual source of loss to the Imperial finances. These barbarians, who are always under arms, pay no taxes, and are free from military service, are in a state of open rebellion. It is not only to the Turkish Government that the Armenians are compelled to pay heavy taxes, they are taxed a second time and overwhelmingly by these same savages. The Imperial Government ought either to disarm these hordes, or else allow the Armenians also to carry arms to defend their lives, their honour, and their property against these enemies of public order.

2nd. To drive out of Armenia the malefactors whose names will be mentioned in the detailed report sent to the Porte. . . .

3rd. To watch the frontiers of Persia and Kurdistan.

To these four classes of remedies the report adds a fifth, a very interesting one, entitled *Improvements to be made in the National Councils*. In many respects these plans of improvement are addressed to the

⁽¹⁾ The Sheri courts are those where the civil and religious law of the Koran and of its sanctioned commentaries is administered. The evidence of Christians is not admitted there.

Armenian community itself, and it would be impossible to praise too highly the spirit of candour and freedom in which the Commission of Inquiry approaches these delicate questions. Let it not be forgotten that one-half of the members of the Commission belonged to the clergy, and that three of these four ecclesiastics were bishops! Amongst other things the Commission asks:

That the national regulations ⁽¹⁾ should be put into force throughout all the provinces of Armenia, and that the Governments of the vilayets respect these regulations. That competent bishops should be trained, and the administration of the dioceses entrusted to married priests as well as bishops. "Competent men, who, however, do not wish to remain celibates, would then embrace the ecclesiastical career."

"To these measures of reform," says the Commission, "we will add another, still more necessary than the preceding, and that is the extension of public education. From the examination of the reports from the provinces, it appears that one of the principal causes of our sufferings is the want of education amongst our countrymen in these localities. How can those whose life, honour, and property are exposed to perpetual dangers and countless persecutions, attend to questions of education? It is for us to take it in hand. Nevertheless, the bishops and National Councils in these provinces can render very great services to public education if they are protected by the Central Administration of Constantinople; for without such protection they would never be able to surmount the obstacles of all kinds with which they would be confronted."

"Your Commission is desirous that a good elementary education should be made compulsory for all Armenian villages, and that the convents should be compelled to come to the aid of the poor inhabitants of the rural districts."

As a sequel to the report of the Commission, a report prepared by the General Assembly was presented on 11th April, 1872, by the Patriarchate to the Grand Vizir, Mahmoud-Nedim-Pasha, and was again on several occasions laid before his successors. Four years having passed by without the state of things being improved, the General Assembly decided in its session of 10/22 September, 1876, that a new report should be drawn up, calling attention to the abuses committed since the date of the former one and still unremedied. It was found possible

(1) The National Constitution, already analysed, is referred to here.

to lay this report before the Assembly on the 29th September, 1876. In fulfilment of their task, the authors had merely to summarise the complaints or *takrirs* sent during the last four years by the Patriarchate to the Sublime Porte, and which, for the most part, had been ineffectual. The state of things revealed in this statement is heartrending. Here again I should be brief. I cannot, however, leave unnoticed amongst this heap of assassinations, exactions, refusals of justice, outrages of all kinds denounced in moderate language, but with awful precision, a few specially characteristic facts. I shall quote almost word for word, merely lopping off a few superfluous details. Here is an episode in which the two religions are seen confronting each other :—

“ In a village called Roumeli, in Baybourt (province of Erzeroum), a young girl 14 years of age, named Martha, daughter of a Mr. Sukias, was abducted on the 13th May, 1872, by a Mussulman called Sepher, son of Ali. Complaint was made to the authorities, and, after a prolonged search, the girl was found. As the Mussulmans asserted that she had renounced Christianity she was questioned, for the purpose of ascertaining whether she had embraced Islamism from conviction, or whether she had ceded to threats or violence. Some notables of the Armenian and Greek communities in the locality, named Manoug, Ohannes, Philippos, and Panayot, effendis, were requested to attend the inquiry. The Mussulman *Hodjas* and other fanatics came in crowds to the court, and in the girl's presence began to shout that she had already embraced Islamism, that there was no need to hear her confession, and that if she declared she wished to return to Christianity she would have to be beheaded, in accordance with the law of the Sheri. The assistant judge, named Doarmush, effendi, joined in the clamour of the crowd, and declared that this question could not be decided by civil law. These and similar threats were thrown into the face of the young girl, whose mother was not allowed to approach her or speak to her. The girl was frightened out of her senses, and, terror-stricken at the sight of the menacing crowd, believed that her only chance of safety lay in declaring that she had embraced Islamism from conviction. The Armenians protested against this violence, and demanded that the requisite freedom and security should be given the young girl to enable her to frankly declare her real will and religious conviction. But this protest was not admitted, and Martha was married by force to Sepher, her abductor. However, the Armenian girl, being unable to live with the Mussulman, braved every danger, and fled during the night to her mother's. The *Ulémas* and the *Hodjas* wished to be avenged on the Christians, by means of the town crier summoned all the Mussulmans to the *medresses*⁽¹⁾ and excited them against the Christians asserting that the latter had forcibly carried off the girl who had been converted to Islamism. Two thousand Mussulmans, armed with swords and cudgels, began to plunder all they could lay their hands on, wounded thirty Armenians, and spread terror amongst the Christian population.

(1) Superior schools connected with the mosques.

"The local authority sent a dispatch to the Governor-General of Erzeroum informing him of the danger. The Governor came to Baybourt with some troops and opened an inquiry, when it was proved that the Christians were not concerned in the flight of Martha, that the Armenian population had suffered pretty considerable losses, estimated at about two thousand pounds Turkish,⁽¹⁾ and that, in fact, thirty Armenians had been wounded. Twenty-nine persons were arrested as guilty and sent to Erzeroum, where some were sentenced to three months' and others to six months' imprisonment; but the *Ulemas* and the *Hodjas* as well as the Turkish town crier, who excited the Mussulmans and made them commit these outrages, were left unpunished. Moreover, no indemnity was granted to those who had been robbed.

"Three petitions in succession were addressed by the Patriarchate to the Sublime Porte (27th July, 24th August, and 8th November, 1872) in order to obtain the strict enforcement of the provisions of the penal code and the indemnification of the Armenians who had been plundered. The Patriarchate received no reply. . . . " ⁽²⁾

In the instance I have just cited, there was at least a beginning of justice, thanks to the interference of an energetic Governor. The following case shows the obstacles which must be encountered in bringing a high official to punishment:—

"Davoud-Agha, a Kaïmakam,⁽³⁾ of Zeitoum, strangled, with his own hands, a man named Artin, who was employed as a *zaptieh*⁽⁴⁾ in the same town. A *takrir* was sent on the subject to the Sublime Porte, dated 6 Redjeb, 1293 (13th July, 1876). The Porte sent orders by telegraph, and afterwards in a letter from the Grand Vizir to the Governor-General of Aleppo. The inquiry established the guilt of the Kaïmakam, Davoud-Agha, who was sentenced to death. However, the Court of Appeal of Marach, before which the case was brought, sought to invalidate the verdict of the lower Court, stating that the *witnesses for the prosecution were not Mussulmans but Christians*, and that therefore the sentence could not be carried out.

"A further *takrir* from the Patriarch, dated 17 Chaban, 1293 (24th August, 1876).

"At the request of the Patriarch the case was referred to the High Court of Justice at Constantinople."⁽⁵⁾

The High Court had not come to a decision at the date of the report from which this account is taken. But admitting that it eventually overruled the odious and iniquitous finding of the Court of Marach, it does not follow on that account that justice was done. The inquiry is full of examples which show us the orders of the Central Administration and the higher Courts of Justice openly defied by the local authorities.

(1) A Turkish pound=18s.

(2) Inquiry of 1876, No. 10, pp. 26, 27.

(3) In the Turkish Administration a Kaïmakam is the ruler of a canton (*casa*).

(4) Local policeman.

(5) Inquiry of 1876, No. 34, page 56.

Now it is the Derebeys who are guilty "of incredible exactions and abuses of all kinds," whom a Commissioner of the Porte, Sami-Bey, orders to be confined in the town of Diarbekir. Scarcely has Sami-Bey departed when the Derebeys are released.⁽¹⁾ Now it is another tyrant, Shah-Hussein-Bey, Kaïmakam of Gouzouldjan, who sticks to his place in spite of five orders from the Grand Vizir instructing the Governor of the vilayet of Erzeroum to allot him another residence.⁽²⁾ The first of these orders from the Grand Vizir tells us that, according to the complaints and protests received, "the said Shah-Hussein-Bey, the brothers Abraham-Bey and Timour-Bey, also a man named Gullab-Oglou-Aziz, who has murdered his father, mother, wife, and some other persons, commit murders, insult the honour of families, set fields on fire, and are addicted to acts of rapine." But in order that a proper inquiry may be held into these facts, and the punishment of the guilty persons ensured, "it is essential that the said Hussein-Bey be dismissed from his post as Kaïmakam of Gouzouldjan, and replaced by an honest official worthy of the place; the above-mentioned Beys and their partisans must be temporarily placed under arrest, until their innocence or guilt is established, so that the population, being publicly requested to appear before the Courts, may do so in perfect safety, and there relate their grievances and give utterance to their complaints."

Copies of this order, and of the four following ones, intended to show the goodwill of the Central Administration, are sent to the Armenian Patriarch. But at the end of two years, a fresh *takrir* from the Patriarch, dated the 14th June, 1873, states that Shah-Hussein-Bey is still all-powerful, that he continues to occupy his post, and that by way of avenging himself on the unfortunate population "he redoubles his violence towards it. Those amongst the Armenians of Gouzouldjan who happen to be in Constantinople have lately applied to the Patriarchate; they entreat the Government to show them a spot where they can live secure from the oppressive yoke of this Kaïmakam. . . ."

Three more years pass over, and the report of September, 1876, states that Hussein-Bey is still Kaïmakam of Gouzouldjan.

(¹) Inquiry of 1876, No. 25, page 54.

(²) *Ibid.* No. 15, pp. 31-36. The orders from the Grand Vizir are given word for word in the report.

These local tyrannies, which know neither curb nor law, are not, according to the report of 1876, peculiar to this or that canton, or this or that village. They extend, as a fatal consequence of the weakness and venality which prevail in the upper administrative regions, throughout the whole of Armenia; I might say, if I cared to wander beyond the limits of my subject, throughout almost the whole of Asia Minor, with the exception of the large towns. One of the commonest forms consists of the appropriation of lands which the Armenian peasants have occupied as owners from time immemorial, and which they have rendered fertile by the sweat of their brows. Numerous Kurdish Beys and Moslem Aghas, in spite of the edicts of reform, seek to appropriate the fields, the vineyards, and the gardens of the Christian population, consider them as their *odjalik* (appanage), treat the peasant like a regular serf, and take from him, often by force, the meagre product of his labour. The result is that the peasant in many cases finds himself compelled to abandon his family and his fields, and emigrate to Constantinople or elsewhere, and that many families, deprived of their mainstay, are reduced to desperate poverty.

A *takrir* from the Patriarch Nercès, dated 24 Redjeb, 1291 (24 Aug./5 Sept., 1876), denounced these deeds in general terms. The Sublime Porte having pointed out to him that no notice could be taken of vague complaints, the Patriarch, in reply, gave a long and precise enumeration of the lands appropriated, with the names of the appropriators. I cannot, of course, reproduce the list here, as it covers ten pages of the report of 1876. Suffice it to say that it applies to the whole or part of the lands of 258 villages, twenty-two convents, two market towns, and one city!⁽¹⁾ But, irrespective of this list, the report of 1876 discloses facts the existence of which can only be accounted for on the ground of a state of complete anarchy. Here, for instance, is a Kurdish chief, Abdi-Bey, who, after getting himself appointed Mudir,⁽²⁾ joins some other brigands, seizes by force the lands cultivated by the Armenians in the district of Shaberd (vilayet of Diarbekir), lays hands on the cattle, and demolishes the church of the Armenian cemetery of

(¹) Inquiry of 1876, No. 23, pp. 44-54.

(²) Under the system inaugurated by the organic vilayet law of 1867, the *Mudir* is the ruler of a group of communes (*Nahié*). The *Mudir* is appointed by the Government. (See *Blue Book*, Turkey, No. 3, 1881, page 53.)

Housb, to build himself a house with.⁽¹⁾ Here is another Ottoman official, Ibrahim-Zadé-Rechi, effendi, who was sent in 1873 to the district of Chadkakh (province of Van), with orders to restore to the Armenian inhabitants of eighteen villages in this district the lands of which they had been arbitrarily dispossessed. Instead of doing that, the traitor makes it his duty to secretly register, in the name of the Kurdish Beys, the whole of the most productive lands. Two hundred victims of this monstrous fraud protest. The authorities of Van decide in their favour, and give them the title deeds (*tapou*) of 500 pieces of land.⁽²⁾ The Kurdish Beys, exasperated, make a raid on ten villages, set fire to several stables and stacks of fodder, and by the use of horrible threats strike terror into the population.⁽³⁾

If individual liberty and real property are not respected, it is not to be expected that personal property will fare any better. I find in the report of the inquiry of 1876 a detailed statement, sent on the 21st September, 1873, by the Armenian Patriarchate to the Sublime Porte, of articles stolen by the Kurds in the space of one year from the Armenian inhabitants of seventeen villages in the Madgan district. The total consists of 799 sheep, 251 pieces of red printed calico of the value of 53,550 piastres, 121 pieces of clothing, and 1,972 batmans⁽⁴⁾ of food and provisions.⁽⁵⁾

Sometimes plunder is transformed into tribute. In 1874, the Kurds inhabiting the village of Mahboubang invaded the Armenian convent of Aghpurig, in Mouch, and after a good feast they withdrew, stipulating an annual tribute of 400 piastres, four oxen, twenty sheep, four batman of tobacco, four batmans of butter, and nine bushels of wheat.⁽⁶⁾

Can any more frightful condition be imagined than that of this population enslaved, outraged, plundered, and fleeced, and which, to crown all, vainly asks for the right to carry arms for the defence of the lives, honour, and property against armed enemies?

(1) Inquiry of 1876, No. 20, page 38.

(2) The title deed called *tapou*, bearing the Imperial *toughra*, is not in Turkish law a deed of absolute ownership, but its effect is to render the possession of State lands granted by the Government to private persons hereditary in a direct ascending or descending line. Engelhard, *La Turquie et le Tanzimat*, vol. i., page 208.

(3) Inquiry of 1876, No. 22, page 40.

(4) The batman is a measure of weight of about 8 kilogrammes.

(5) Inquiry No. 18, page 37.

(6) Inquiry No. 21, page 38.

Did justice, which was only a name in the provinces, exist in reality, at all events at Constantinople? Was there any hope that by applying to the first authorities of the Empire, and trying all legal means, right would triumph at last? The following case, given as a concluding instance in this painful sketch, proves that even after a verdict given in the highest Court, and confirmed by an Imperial iradé, the despoiled victim was not even then sure of regaining possession of his property :—

“Ishak-Bey and several other Mussulman Aghas laying claim to all the houses, shops, fields, vineyards, and gardens situated in the villages of Tcharsandjak (district of Kharpout) forced the Armenians of these villages to pay them rent for these properties, to supply themselves with seed, and afterwards to divide with them the produce of the land. The Bey and the Aghas were supported by the local authority.

“The quarrel had been going on for about fifteen years, when, at the request of the Patriarchate, the Sublime Porte sent to the spot a Special Commission to inquire into the question. The report of this Commission was submitted for judgment, with documents in proof, to the State Council, which, after a thorough and searching investigation, declared the claims of Ishak Bey and the other Mussulman Aghas to be unfounded. This decision was confirmed by Imperial iradé, and the local authority was ordered to carry it into effect.

“The villagers were triumphant. Their rights were at length admitted; but their joy was of short duration. The local authority, instead of carrying out the decision of the State Council, confirmed by Imperial decree, demanded the re-opening of the case! His report was submitted for consideration to the Council of State. At the same time two of the Islam Aghas of Tcharsandjak came to Constantinople, and also applied to the Council of State. The latter, without granting a hearing to the opposite party, reversed its original decision, and in spite of the Imperial iradé which had sanctioned it, ordered the local authority to open a fresh inquiry, to hear both sides, and to give judgment subject to appeal. This fresh decision, which quashed the former one without a judicial investigation, was in its turn sanctioned by Imperial iradé, and communicated to the local authority as well as to the Patriarchate. It was in vain that the latter claimed—the first time on the 5th August, 1872, and again on the 8th January, 1876—the carrying out pure and simple of the first decision. His appeals were quite fruitless.”⁽¹⁾

Thus no verdict is sacred when it is a Christian who gains a suit. It is the height of despotism. These unfortunate Armenians in the provinces have nothing that they can really call their own, for the Commander of the Faithful has no respect for his own word when it has been given to a Christian.

(1) Inquiry of 1876, No. 7, pp. 24, 25. It is to this Council of State, which we have just seen at work, that the Constantinople wags have given the nickname of Council of the *Evet Effendim* (Yes, sir). Engelhardt, *La Turquie et le Tancimat*, vol. ii., page 170.

Such was the state of things in Armenia, as in nearly the Turkish Empire, twenty years after the Treaty of Paris, after that Hatti-Houmayoun of which Europe had solemnly

But, as we have seen, the germ of the right of intervention in the Treaty of Paris, and the time had come when it was going boldly into the light of day. Already Russia was placing the Great Powers in this awkward dilemma: Let us agree on one thing, if not, I will take steps alone to obtain real guarantees for the fulfilment of the Porte's promises. The latter tried to parry this by confessing its sins and promising to amend. "The origin of the crisis which our empire is going through to-day may be expressed in a single sentence . . . the imperfect administration . . . and the arbitrariness, so to speak, which all have had in the transaction of business." It was thus that the Sultan Abdulaziz who had just succeeded his brother Mourad on the throne, addressed himself in the Imperial Hatt of 10th September, 1876. . . . after, when sending the Great Powers the copy of the Constitution granted on the 11/23 December to the Ottoman nation, the Minister, Safvet-Pasha, after vaunting these "new institutions" as laying the foundations in the Ottoman Empire of the reign of liberty and equality, that is to say, the triumph of civilisation," added

"It is not impossible that in the absence of any other subject of comparison, the spirit of systematic disparagement, of which we have had so much reason to complain in Europe, will be brought to bear on the question of performance, and will be made to cast doubt on the prompt and thorough introduction of our institutions. To those who appear to be honestly anxious in this respect, I would boldly reply that *deeds will soon follow words*. . . . You will see, M. l'Ambassadeur, in case a comparison should be made between the provisions in former Imperial Hatts and the provisions of the present Constitution, that the latter emphatically point out and prove the radical difference between the two. In fact, a difference such as absolutely excludes even the thought of comparison. The Constitution is not a promise, it is a real and deliberate act, which is the property of all the Ottomans, and the development of which could only be retarded by the will of the nation itself, combined with that of Europe. This definitive and solemn act has not been asked for by Europe, nor has it been imposed on her. The Imperial Government could not therefore have intended to do anything but what it has done, or ideas expressed outside. It has been subjected to no pressure and

(1) See what I wrote on this Constitution, vol. viii. of the *Revue de Droit*, page 511 and following. *Nouvelle étude sur la question d'Orient, l'armistice de Constantinople et ses suites*.

save those of reason and patriotism. That is why we ask Europe to-day to have confidence in our young institutions, and to see in them the complete protection of the interests which she had undertaken the task of safeguarding. We are justified in saying, with pride, that her solicitude has been at once exceeded and surpassed by the generous and supreme initiative of our august Sovereign."⁽¹⁾

It appears only too clearly from this document that the actual aim of the new charter was to postpone the time when Europe would ask the Porte for something more than fair words and laws made for show. In other words, those who used this fine language intended merely to prevent the interests of the Christian nations still under Turkish rule from being formally and *explicitly* put under the protection of European international law, as they had already been *implicitly* by the Treaty of Paris. This time the attempt failed. Europe had not confidence. She did not consider the Constitution "a complete protection of the interests which she had undertaken the task of safeguarding." If she did not take steps herself to obtain better guarantees, she let Russia do so.

Everybody knows with what energy, and at the price of what sacrifices, Russia acquitted herself of her task. Everybody remembers the war carried on simultaneously in Europe and Asia, and concluded under the walls of Constantinople by the Treaty of San Stefano. At the date of this Treaty (3rd March, 1878), the Russians occupied as conquerors a portion of Turkish Armenia. They had taken Kars, and kept Erzeroum invested. A number of Armenian officers, Russian subjects, had fought brilliantly in the ranks of the conquerors. The commander-in-chief of the Russian army of Asia was an Armenian, Loris-Mélikoff. It would have been a proof of ingratitude and want of intelligence on the part of Russia, as well as inconsistent with the object of the war, if she had shown herself indifferent to the lot of the Armenians destined to remain or return under Turkish rule. Indeed, there was a risk of their lot being still further aggravated, if possible, by the state of disorganisation and absolute ruin into which the country had been plunged by the war. Hence originated Article 16 of the Treaty of San Stefano.

To this Treaty belong the honour and merit of being the first international compact which mentions Armenia. For the nation, therefore, which is occupying our attention, it marks the commencement of a new era, to a survey of which the following chapters will be devoted.

(¹) Circular from Safvet Pasha to the representatives of the Porte with the Great Powers, 26th December, 1876. *Staatsarchiv*, vol. xxxi., page 827.

CHAPTER III.—LEGAL POSITION OF TURKISH ARMENIA
UNDER THE TREATIES OF SAN STEFANO AND BERLIN,
AND THE ANGLO-TURKISH CONVENTION OF 4TH JUNE,
1878.

CONTENTS.—Clause 16 of the Treaty of San Stefano—Its Range—The Berlin Treaty converts Turko-Russian agreements into Turko-European agreements—Impossibility, both from a legal and a political standpoint, of neglecting Armenia in view of the Anglo-Turkish Convention of 4th June, 1878—The Armenians and the Berlin Congress—Comparison between Clause 61 of the Berlin Treaty and Clause 16 of the Treaty of San Stefano—Clause 62 of the same Treaty—Respective rights and duties of Turkey and the Great Powers—Legitimate hopes of the Armenians.

ARTICLE 16 of the Treaty of San Stefano reads as follows :—

“As the evacuation by the Russian troops of the territory which they occupy in Armenia, and which is to be restored to Turkey, might give rise to conflicts and complications detrimental to the maintenance of good relations between the two countries, the Sublime Porte engages to carry into effect, without further delay, the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security from Kurds and Circassians.”

The protocol and the agreement for an armistice, signed at Adrianople on the 31st January, 1878, made no mention of the Armenians. The omission made them uneasy, and the representations of their Patriarch were certainly instrumental in getting the omission rectified.⁽¹⁾ Without exactly giving the Armenians everything they wanted, the Treaty of San Stefano took for its starting point the establishment of two facts: firstly, that local necessities demanded improvements and reforms; and secondly, that the safety of the Armenian populations was menaced by the Kurds and Circassians. These two facts were dealt with by a two-fold international engagement contracted by Turkey with Russia: 1st, to effect the necessary improvements and reforms; 2nd, to guarantee the security of the Armenians. This double pledge was to be redeemed

(1) See *Discours prononcé par La Sainteté Nercès, Patriarche Arménien, à la séance du 1^{er} Juillet / 2^o Août, 1878, de l'Assemblée des Représentants*, page 10. Printed at Constantinople, by Aramian, 1878.

“without further delay,” only Article 16 did not state in what way Russia would supervise its execution. This was a void which the Berlin Treaty was destined to fill.

The task which the Berlin Congress had to fill was, in a general way, to replace *mutatis mutandis* the Turco-Russian Treaty of San Stefano, which had put an end to the war, by a Turco-European Treaty, intended to consolidate peace, and to safeguard the interests and rights of the Christian populations of Turkey, by placing them expressly under the collective protection of the Great Powers. In the latter respect the Treaty of Berlin, it is true, does not create a new right, since, as we have seen and the facts attest, the right of Europe to intervene collectively for the defence of Christian interests existed already. But it has the great advantage over the Treaty of Paris of 1856 of making words accord with the actual position, and of defining the international engagements of Turkey. It no longer leaves room for equivocation. It is no longer a question of concealing permanent intervention and collective guardianship under deceitful protestations of respect for the independence and integrity of the Turkish Empire and the Sultan's sovereignty in his own dominions. States formerly vassals of Turkey, and which, in fact, had ceased to be so, were proclaimed independent. One portion of Bulgaria ceases to be an integral part of the Empire, and is converted into a vassal State. Another portion, under the name of Eastern Roumelia, receives complete administrative autonomy. Bosnia and Herzegovina are occupied and administered by Austro-Hungary. All the other provinces of European Turkey will be granted Constitutions analogous to that of the island of Crete. Would the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, already nominally included in the Treaty of San Stefano, be passed over in silence by that of Berlin? As a matter both of justice and policy, it was impossible.

Indeed, it was understood from the outset of the negotiations that the entire text of the Treaty of San Stefano would be communicated to the Great Powers, and that “every article would be placed before the Congress, not necessarily for acceptance, but in order that it might be considered what articles required acceptance or concurrence by the several Powers.”⁽¹⁾ Prince Bismarck made a declaration to the same

(1) Circular from Lord Salisbury, 1st April, 1878. Martens. N. R. G. Continuation, 2nd series, vol. iii., page 256 and following. See *Ibid.*, page 262 and following, the reply of Prince Gortschakoff in his circular of 9th April, 1878.

effect on opening the Congress. "It is for the purpose of submitting the work of San Stefano to the Signatory Powers of the Treaties of 1856 and 1871 for free discussion that we have met." It follows from the provisions of the Treaty of San Stefano which were not expressly cancelled or altered by the common consent of the Powers continued to be in force between the parties to the aforesaid Treaty, and such fact is the case with several clauses.⁽¹⁾ Such would also have been the case with Article 16, relating to the Armenians, if the diplomatic conference which met at Berlin had simply passed it over in silence. This clause would then have remained in force—that is to say, Russia alone would have been entitled to exercise the right of protectorate over the Turkish provinces inhabited by the Armenians.

This consequence was evidently incompatible with the very object which the Berlin Congress had in view. Such a privileged position could not be left to Russia. England was the first to perceive this, and before even the Congress had met, she provided against it, so far as she was concerned, both in regard to Russia and the Porte.

On the 30th May, 1878, a Memorandum signed at London by the Marquis of Salisbury and Count Schouvaloff, specified the points on which an understanding had been arrived at between the English and the Russian Governments respecting the questions raised by the Treaty of San Stefano.⁽²⁾ Number 7 of this Memorandum says:—

"The promises respecting Armenia, stipulated in the preliminary Treaty of San Stefano, must not be made exclusively to Russia, but to England also."

On the other hand, the Convention of 4th June, 1878, between England and Turkey, stipulates that in return of the engagements undertaken by the former of these Powers to defend the Asiatic territories of the Sultan, the latter not only consents to England occupying and administering the island of Cyprus, but, moreover, promises her "to introduce necessary reforms, to be agreed upon later between the Powers, into the government and for the protection of the Christian and other subjects of the Porte, in these territories."⁽³⁾

(¹) M. E. Holland (*The European Concert on the Eastern Question*), page 222, note 2, contains twelve such provisions out of twenty-nine.

(²) Martens, N. R. G. *Continuation of Samwer and Hoff*, 2nd series, vol. iii., page 269.

(³) See Clause 1, Article 2, of the Convention. *Recueil de Martens*, vol. above-mentioned, page 273.

Thus the Armenians to whom the clause applied had thenceforward two protectors. Unfortunately they were two rival protectors, who might become enemies any day, to the great detriment of their *protégés*. That was another reason why the Berlin Congress took up the question. The principals interested strongly urged it to do so. An Armenian deputation went to Berlin. It consisted of Archbishop Meguerditch Kherimian, ex-Patriarch of Constantinople; of Archbishop Khorene;⁽¹⁾ of Mr. Papassian, civil delegate; and Mr. Minasse Tcheraz, secretary. The deputation handed the President of the Congress a letter from the Armenian Patriarch Nercès, a memorandum drawn up by the delegates, a scheme of organic legislation, to which I shall revert subsequently, and the statistical notice which has been referred to above, with a map of the Armenian provinces.

It was at the end of the sitting of 4th July, 1878, that Lord Salisbury proposed to the Congress to consider Article 16 of the Treaty of San Stefano. The second English plenipotentiary declared himself ready to accept the last three lines of the clause, which have in view the improvements and reforms to be granted to the Armenians, if the Congress decided on the suppression of the first three lines, which appeared to render the evacuation of the Russian troops contingent on the concession of these reforms by the Sublime Porte. Otherwise Lord Salisbury would subsequently propose a special clause for the Armenians.

Count Schouvaloff, who did not wish to raise a discussion for which he was not prepared at that moment, expressed the fear that if the evacuation of the Russian troops took place before the execution of the promised reforms, it would be the signal for serious disturbances.⁽²⁾

On the 6th July the consideration of the question was resumed. Lord Salisbury proposed that the clause should be drawn up as follows:—

“The Sublime Porte engages to carry into effect, without further delay, the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by Armenians, and to guarantee their security from Kurds and Circassians. *It will come to an understanding subsequently with the six other Signatory Powers respecting the extent of this engagement, and the measures necessary for carrying it into effect.*”

(¹) Monsignor Khorene, who is a distinguished poet, has made a remarkable Armenian translation, says Mr. Broussali, of Lamartine's “*Harmonies*” and “*Meditations*.” *Revue française de l'étranger et des colonies*, vol. ii., page 212.

(²) Berlin Congress Protocol No. xii., in fine.

The first sentence is taken word for word from Article 16 of the Treaty of San Stefano. The sentence in italics was drawn up by Lord Salisbury. Protocol No. xiv. reports the discussion which took place on this subject as follows :—

"Lord Salisbury says that the interests of the Armenians must be secured, and that the object of the proposal is to give them hopes of immediate improvement and at the same time of progress to come.

"Caratheodory Pasha admits that during the last war the unsubdued tribes caused disturbances, but as soon as the Porte was informed of it, it took steps to put an end to them. Lord Salisbury's proposal appears to refer to further measures which Caratheodory Pasha would like credit to be given to the Porte for the adoption of which it has adopted, and the following words to be added to the text: 'The Porte will communicate to the six Powers the result of the measures which have been taken for this purpose.' Whilst the addition would satisfy the Government, it would complete the sense of the text submitted by the plenipotentiaries.

"Count Schouvaloff prefers Lord Salisbury's wording. If the Porte takes any measures, and they have not been carried into effect, it is useless to mention them.

"The President points out that it is, perhaps, difficult to carry out measures amongst independent tribes, and expresses doubt as to the practicality of the clause proposed by Lord Salisbury.

"Caratheodory Pasha still continuing to advocate the addition which he suggested, Lord Salisbury asks for the discussion to be postponed in order to allow some alteration in the original text.

"The question is postponed to an early sitting."

What took place between this sitting and the following one is not known. The Armenian deputation, aware of what was going on, proposed the substitution of something less vague and more imperative. The "subsequent understanding" on the extent of Turkey's engagements was of the sort of "satisfecit" asked for by Caratheodory Pasha for the measures already taken? Did Prince Bismarck, who had expressed serious and ironical doubts about the "practical efficacy" of Lord Salisbury's proposal, suggest a more efficacious formula? The protocols of the Conference contain nothing on the subject; but at all events at the sitting of the 15th Lord Salisbury read without comment the following clause "agreed between the plenipotentiaries of Great Britain and Turkey":—

"The Sublime Porte undertakes to carry out, without further delay, the ameliorations and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their safety against the Circassians and Kurds. *It will make known periodically the steps taken to this effect to the Powers, who will watch them.*"⁽¹⁾

(¹) Protocol No. xv.

This wording, adopted without discussion, became, with a slight change of form, that of the 61st Article of the Treaty of Berlin, which ends as follows :—

“ It will make known periodically the steps taken to this effect to the Powers, who will superintend their application.”

It is not difficult to see what this finally corrected formula adds to Article 16 of the Treaty of San Stefano, and even to the first proposal of Lord Salisbury. There is, first of all, the obligation on the part of Turkey to give not once, but *periodically*, notification of the measures taken. If this obligation is combined with the undertaking to carry out, *without delay*, the necessary improvements and reforms, it confers on the Powers the right to *discuss* and *criticise* these measures, if they are not in accordance with the purpose indicated. The Powers have, moreover, the right to superintend the *application* of the measures taken.

To this provision, which concerns the Armenians alone, there must in strict right be added the following clauses of Article 62 of the Berlin Treaty, clauses of which the Armenians may avail themselves for the same reason as all the other Ottoman subjects :—

“ The Sublime Porte having expressed the intention to maintain the principle of religious liberty, and give it the widest scope, the Contracting Parties take note of this spontaneous declaration.

“ In no part of the Ottoman Empire shall difference of religion be alleged against any person as a ground for exclusion or incapacity as regards the discharge of civil and political rights, admission to the public employments, functions, and honours, or the exercise of the various professions and industries.

“ All persons shall be admitted, without distinction of religion, to give evidence before the tribunals.

“ The freedom and outward exercise of all forms of worship are assured to all, and no hindrance shall be offered either to the hierarchical organisations of the various communions or to their relations with their spiritual chiefs.”

It is clear that if the Porte had fulfilled its engagements, the first effect of the measures to be taken *without delay*, in accordance with Article 61, should have been to ensure the Armenians, no longer on paper, but in reality, the enjoyment of these rights. It may therefore be said in a general way, that the material security and the normal conditions of the political existence, as well as the civil and religious freedom of

the Armenians of Turkey, are to-day placed *under the express protection of the international law of contract, and under the control of the Great Powers*. The natural obligations of the Turkish Government to all its subjects have become, as regards the Armenians, *strict engagements* with the States which are parties to the Treaty, and as regards all the Christian Turkish subjects in Asia *strict engagements* with England. But these obligations do not alone involve a right on the part of the Great Powers. They in their turn have duties to perform. By taking part in Turkey's work of government they share her responsibility, and they would fail in their duty if they allowed such stipulations to remain a dead letter. Better indeed would it have been to stipulate nothing on behalf of this people, than to add to its wretchedness the bitterness of disappointed hopes.

The speech of Patriarch Nercès gives us an idea of what these hopes were. After admitting that Article 61 does not give the Armenian nation *immediate* satisfaction, he hastens to reply to the objections and alleviate the disappointment of those who think they have gained nothing. Confident of the future, he exhorts his countrymen and co-religionists to persevere in their patriotic work. "Let us go to Armenia: let us send thither all the ecclesiastics we have who are able, learned, and devoted to their country; let our teachers, our youth so full of ardour, our artisans and our merchants, flock thither; let all those unfortunate people whom misery has driven from their firesides return; famine, pestilence, and oppression are going to cease in Armenia; no longer will life, property, and honour be outraged there. Henceforth Armenia will have her roads and canals; mills will spring up; English capital will seek investment there; let our capitalists go there also, and commence to work together from to-day. Let us combine to establish schools in every town and every village; let us unite and extend our commerce and develop our industry; let all the Armenians in India, Armenia, England, Turkey and Russia, Austria and Persia, join hands and unite in this work of progress."⁽¹⁾

Thus spoke the Patriarch Nercès upwards of twelve years ago. Have events justified the enthusiastic hopes of the venerable prelate? Are the lives, honour, and property of the Armenian populations safer now than before 1878? Are the unarmed peasants less exposed to the

(¹) Speech of 21 July / 2 August, 1878. Op. c., pp. 19, 20.

depredations of the savage hordes which surround them? Is justice better administered or government less tyrannical? Are the officials better educated and less venal? In short, what has Turkey done—what have the Great Powers done—what ought they to do to fulfil the international engagements which they have contracted by the Articles 61st and 62nd of the Berlin Treaty?

It will be the object of the remainder of this work to reply to these questions.

CHAPTER IV.—THE ACTUAL POSITION OF ARMENIA AND THE ARMENIANS IN TURKEY UNDER THE TREATIES OF 1878.

SECTION 1.—INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

CONTENTS.—Conclusions of the first part of this work—Since 1878 the Armenian question has been transformed from an internal to an international one—Responsibility of the Great Powers in general, and England in particular—Examination of the principle of irresponsibility recently advanced by Lord Salisbury—The real state of matters to be investigated—Principal authority for 1878-1881 the English Blue-Books—The Blue-Book of 1889.

In the first part of this work, I tried to show what should be and what was the condition of the Armenian provinces of Asiatic Turkey under the *régime* of collective intervention which was implied, if not expressly stipulated, by the Treaty of Paris of 1856. It appeared that in spite of the lamentable position of Armenia, Europe, until 1878, had done nothing for her. Nevertheless, Europe was entitled to interfere, as she had already done in the case of Greece, Crete and Lebanon, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria, in consonance with the principle, that as Turkey owed the prolongation of her political existence solely to the protection of the Great Powers, it behoved them to superintend their work and direct it. But it appeared at that time as if insurrection were the only means of attracting the attention of European diplomacy. And as the Armenians are a peaceable people, who suffer but do not rebel, European diplomacy remained indifferent to their sufferings. This attitude, which was only conservative in appearance, but which, in reality, was morally indefensible, imprudent, and liable to foment insurrection, was abandoned in 1878, when the Berlin Treaty solemnly warranted, by express international legislative enactment, the right of the Armenians of Asiatic Turkey to their lives and the security of their persons and property.

We have seen in the foregoing chapter the genesis and the precise signification of Article 61 of this Treaty. It is Article 16 of the Treaty of San Stefano extended and defined. Instead of agreeing with Russia only, Turkey gave her pledge to all the Great Powers twelve years ago, "to carry out *without further delay* the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security against the Kurds and Circassians." Moreover, in a characteristic clause which the Treaty of San Stefano did not contain, and which was added at the suggestion of Lord Salisbury, it was agreed "that Turkey should make known periodically the steps taken to this effect to the Powers, who will superintend their application." The Armenian question thus ceased to be a domestic one, concerning the Ottoman Empire alone, and became an international one, the solution of which involves the responsibility of all the Signatory Powers of the Berlin Treaty. Finally, it has been shown that in addition to this joint responsibility, the Treaty of the 4th of June, 1878, relating to the island of Cyprus, entails upon England a special and more direct responsibility. In this Treaty England appears as a veritable ally of Turkey for the external defence of the Sultan's Asiatic territories, at the same time that she becomes his *associate* for the introduction of the *necessary reforms* ("to be agreed upon by the two Powers," as the Treaty says). It is inconceivable that England should have assumed the former of these positions without seriously intending to avail herself of the latter. To constitute herself the champion of an inhuman and corrupt Government, without insisting on its reformation, would be to become its accomplice.

Such are in substance the conclusions of the first part of this work. However simple and natural they may appear, they are unfortunately in conflict with the principle recently laid down by the head of the English Cabinet. Replying, on the 28th of June, 1889, in the House of Lords, to a question of Lord Carnarvon, the Marquis of Salisbury denied that England had contracted any special duties to the peoples of Asia Minor. According to him, "England is not the protector of Turkey, and cannot exercise the rights of guardianship over her." It is to be regretted that the noble Lord did not take the trouble to justify his statement, which is in direct contradiction with the text of the Treaty of the 4th of June, 1878. It would have been interesting to see how England could undertake to defend the Asiatic possessions of the Sultan

without becoming the protector of Turkey; how she could have assumed the duties of guardianship without acquiring its rights; or, finally, why the particular position which she took up with regard to Turkey does not entail upon her "special duties" to the oppressed populations whose master is her client.

If the noble Lord's statement will not stand examination in the light of the international documents which bear his signature, it nevertheless proves one thing, and that is his great eagerness to decline all responsibility for the bad administration which, after as before the European Treaty of Berlin, and the Anglo-Turkish Convention relating to Cyprus, continued to oppress Armenia in particular, and the Asiatic provinces of Turkey in general. In taking this position, the noble Lord admits implicitly that this administration is just as detestable as ever, and that during that period no serious reform has been introduced, no improvement effected. But it is impossible to make such a confession without at the same time accepting the responsibility which it entails. The present heads of the English Government may do what they like; their eloquence will never avail to get their country, or the Great Powers collectively, out of this dilemma. Either the great European States, including England, have no right to meddle with the domestic affairs of the Ottoman Empire—and in this case Article 8 of the Treaty relating to Cyprus, and the greater part of the Berlin Treaty, including Article 61, relating to Armenia, are but a snare, a string of empty words intended to encourage vain hopes;—or, if that is not the case, then the strict corollary of the right of superintendence, interference, and co-operation which the Powers have arrogated to themselves, is an obligation on their part to demand, and, if necessary, to enforce, the promised reforms; for this right itself, constituting, as it does, a derogation to the general principles of international law, is only justified because in claiming it the European Powers could consider themselves the representatives of civilisation and humanity.

The examination of the actual state of Armenia since 1878 is, therefore, essentially connected with European international law. The question arises whether now, any more than before, under the Treaties at present in force, the Turkish Government has done anything to ensure the Armenians the right to live; to reap the crops of wheat they have sown; to be no longer exposed, unarmed and defenceless, to the attacks and plunder of barbarian hordes; to be no longer tyrannised over by their

Agas and Beys ; to pay no more tribute to the rapacity of overbearing administrators and dishonest magistrates ; and to have their evidence accepted by the courts of law on the same footing as that of Mussulmans. Further, the question arises whether measures have been taken to put an end to the excessive centralisation, which paralyses all the vital energies of the provinces, exhausts their resources, and the chief effect of which is to discourage the well-meaning officials and reward the bad. It is to this inquiry I have devoted myself, endeavouring to draw only upon well-authenticated sources.

Amongst these sources the English Blue-Books occupy the front rank. I have read all those which, since 1878, contain the correspondence, Consular reports, or other documents relating to Armenia. No reading can be more attractive or more painfully instructive. The greater part of the English Consuls who have supplied the materials until 1881 are officers who belong, or have belonged to the English Army—dauntless travellers, knowing the East, often journeying over their respective districts, observing narrowly, listening impartially, and relating, generally with dispassionate sincerity, all they have actually seen and heard. The reports of Captain, subsequently Major, Trotter ; Captain, now Major, Everett ; Captain Clayton ; Lieutenant, now Colonel, Chermiside—have all the value of excellent historical documents. As the Armenian element occupies an important place in Anatolia, the reports relating to this province sent by the Consul-General, Lieutenant-Colonel Wilson, and Captain Steward, may be consulted with advantage ; as also those from Vice-Consul Billiotti about the vilayet of Trebizond, and Gatheral about the vilayet of Angora.

The Blue-Books which treat specially of the Armenian question from 1878 until 1889 are the following :—

Turkey, No. 10 (1879).

id. „ 1 (1880). Correspondence relating to the disturbances at Zeitoun.

id. „ 4 (1880).

id. „ 7 (1880).

id. „ 9 (1880). Identical Note of the Powers of 11th June, 1880.

id. „ 23 (1880).

id. „ 5 (1881). Kurdish invasion of Persia.

id. „ 6 (1881).

id. „ 10 (1881). Demarcation of the Russo-Turkish frontier.

To these may be added Turkey, No. 8 (1881), entitled, "*Reports on the Administration of Justice in the Civil, Criminal, and Commercial Courts, in the various provinces of the Ottoman Empire.*" It is a collection of extremely interesting reports on the (negative) effects of the pretended re-organisation of the Ottoman Courts and tribunals. Several relate specially to the administration of justice in the various vilayets (provincial governments) of Asia Minor.

Unfortunately, from 1881 until 1889—that is to say, during eight years—no Blue-Book dealt any further with the Armenian provinces, or even with Asia Minor in general. This long period of darkness and silence was at last interrupted, under the heavy pressure of public opinion, by the publication of a new Blue-Book, entitled "Turkey, No. 1 (1889): *Correspondence respecting the condition of the populations in Asiatic Turkey.*" But the ninety-one pages were far from supplying what public opinion had evidently a right to expect. It seems that the object of the compiler of the collection was not to throw light on the present condition of Armenia, but, on the contrary, to afford as little information about it as possible. As the last document previously published was dated 14th February, 1881, and the oldest document of the new collection is dated 15th March, 1888, we are still without any information from English Consular or official sources as to what took place during this interval of seven years. It does not follow, however, that the new collection, meagre though it is, tells us nothing fresh. On the contrary, it tells us a great deal, and anyone who reads it attentively can divine still more. The same may be said of its continuation, entitled "Turkey, No. 1 (1890): *Correspondence respecting the condition of the populations in Asiatic Turkey and the trial of Moussa Bey.*" But it would be reversing the order of this work to commence with the most recent period. Moreover, in order to judge of the latter correctly, it is essential to go back to the three years 1878-1881, during which the vigilance of the Consuls of Great Britain was most active and thorough. If afterwards it is shown that since then nothing has been done to improve the general condition of the Armenians of Turkey in Asia, sufficient proof will have been afforded that the latter have the right to complain of the violation of the Treaties of 1878, and that the European Powers are in duty bound to listen to their complaints.

SECTION 2.—PERIOD FROM 1878 TO 1881.

CONTENTS—The horrors of the war of 1877—The responsibility of the Imperial Government dates from the conclusion of peace—No improvement in 1878—Lord Salisbury demands the execution of the Treaties—The Porte appoints a Commission of Reforms for the vilayet of Erzeroum—Severe but ineffectual remonstrances by the English Ambassador in June, 1879—Impotence of the Commissioners—General anarchy—Outrages by the Circassians and Kurds—Complicity of the authorities—Bad treatment of the Christian Commissioners—Partiality of certain Mussulman Commissioners—Invasion of the Circassians, Lazes, &c.—A fresh source of disturbance and suffering encouraged by the authorities—The country threatens to become a regular hell—Obstacles in the way of emigration to Russia.

Review by the aid of Consular reports of the usual *modus operandi* of the various branches of Turkish administration in Asia Minor: 1st, *Financial Administration*: Hardships and abuses connected with the collection of taxes—Illegal charges—Exactions—The famine of 1879-1880 and the Treasury—Charity and the Treasury—The Turkish Government endeavours to deceive Europe as to the actual situation—False information detected by the English Ambassador—Officials speculating in famine—System of *havalés*—2nd, *Administration of Justice*: General notions—Legislative hypocrisy—General corruption—Organised perjury—Difference between the acceptance of Christian and Mussulman evidence—3rd, *Police and Constabulary*: Fallaciousness of the pretended reforms—The causes of the insecurity of the vilayet of Erzeroum, according to Vice-Consul Everett—4th, *Central and Local Administrations*: Defects of the Central Administration—Sloth and disorder—Protection given to bad officials in the provinces—Instances—Effect of misgovernment shown by the aspect of the country—Contrast between the two sides of the Russo-Turkish frontier.

Repeated diplomatic demands—Identical Note of 11th June, 1880—Reply of the Ottoman Government, 5th July, 1880—Collective Note of 7th September, 1880—Note from the Porte, 3rd October, 1880—Absurd execution of the promised reforms—The situation aggravated—England proposes a fresh Collective Note—How the various Powers receive the proposal—Postponement of the proposed representations.

Let us take a glance at the period immediately following the last Turco-Russian war in 1878. The whole of Armenia had suffered horribly. In 1877, five times during the short space of seven months did an army traverse the districts of Pasin, Alashgerd, Kara-Kilissa, Diadin, and Bayazid, taking from the inhabitants supplies of all kinds without payment, and in many cases without giving receipts. Once in the same year, and again in 1878, whole villages, both Christian and

Turkish, were compelled to emigrate on account of the fearful ravages committed by the Kurdish irregular cavalry, and in these flights, which were made in company with the armies, great losses were sustained. To make way for the retreating troops, the village carts were often pushed off the road and overturned, women and children being trampled on and killed, while those who were unable to advance were overtaken by the Kurds and plundered of everything they possessed.⁽¹⁾ Moreover, if the Christian population did not flee, Mussulman fanaticism would avenge itself on them for the success of the Russian arms. At Bayazid, in June, 1877, there was a regular massacre, in which 800 Christians perished.⁽²⁾

However horrible these scenes might be, they must, perhaps, be considered as the inevitable consequences of the war, and of the state of anarchy which it entails in an imperfectly civilised country. It would, therefore, be unjust to impute the responsibility, at least the exclusive responsibility, to the Turkish Government or officials. But they resumed full responsibility from the time when, peace having been concluded, the Armenian population, wretched before the war, and still further impoverished since, was again placed under the regular, undisputed authority of its rulers. Thenceforward it was the duty of the latter, as well as their interest, rightly understood, to restore at least order and security.

The Treaty of Berlin is dated 13th July, 1878; but hostilities had ceased when an armistice was agreed upon at Adrianople on the 31st January previous. Under an ordinary Government a considerable improvement might, therefore, have been effected in the course of the year. Nothing of the kind took place. On the 21st December, 1878, Major Trotter writes from Erzeroum that the present condition of the Christians throughout the district (with the exception of the city of Diarbekir) is "*worse than it has been at any period during the past several years.*"⁽³⁾ The Kurds appear to have the upper hand everywhere, and in some localities arsons, assaults, and rape appear to be committed almost with impunity. The present Governor is well spoken of. He

(¹) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 4 (1880), page 105. Report of Captain Everett, English Vice-Consul.

(²) *Ibid*, page 107, schedules 2, 3, and 4 to Captain Everett's report. A petition of the Armenian community of Bayazid gives the names of the Mussulmans who instigated the massacre, and their position in 1879 (date of the petition). It appears that at that time, a year after the massacre, several of the principal instigators occupied official positions. Some had been taken into the constabulary.

(³) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 10 (1879), page 8.

is described as "an honest man, energetic, and just;" but it is added that "his hands are tied by the *medjliss* (provincial Councils), the members of which are mostly very corrupt, and by the authorities at *Constantinople*."⁽¹⁾ The latter, when the Governor selects a good candidate for an important position, cancel the appointment, and give the place to one of their minions.⁽²⁾ Complaints about the venality of the tribunals are general; a *rich man, or one who has rich friends, can always escape the punishment he deserves*.⁽³⁾ Even when the tribunals sentence him, he is certain, by means of money judiciously spent in the capital, to receive his acquittal from there.⁽⁴⁾

On the 28th of December the same Consul sends fresh details from Diarbekir. The Kurdish chiefs, who were absent during the war, had returned. Availing themselves of the weakness and impotence of the Turkish Government, they oppress their Rayahs, both Christian and Mussulman, more than ever. "Of course, the Christians are the greatest sufferers." Their property and the honour of their wives and daughters appear to be at the mercy of the feudal Beys. The country being entirely empty of troops, in spite of the Governor's entreaties to be provided with them, some of these Beys had the audacity to actually raise small armies, with which they held the country. They took the town of Djezireh, on the Tigris. At last some *regular troops* were sent from Bitlis to dislodge five or six hundred rebels who were occupying the Christian village of Dehé. The rebels withdrew, but the Christians were no better off, for when the regular troops entered the village they plundered and ill-treated the inhabitants, burnt the houses, and violated the women. Major Trotter, who relates these deeds, asserts that he has gathered them from trustworthy sources.⁽⁵⁾

As this English agent becomes acquainted with the country, he is more and more convinced that the most monstrous abuses, incredible anywhere else, are an everyday occurrence in Turkish Armenia. In referring to this he expresses himself very emphatically. On one of his consular journeys he is told of a *Kaïmakam* ⁽⁶⁾ who was accused by the people

(1) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 10 (1879), page 8.

(2) *Ibid*, page 13.

(3) *Ibid*, page 8.

(4) *Ibid*, page 13.

(5) *Ibid*, pp. 13-17.

(6) In the Turkish administrative organisation, the province (vilayet), at the head of which is the *vali* (Governor-General), is divided into *sandjaks* or *levas* (districts), the civil rulers of which are called *mutessarifs* (prefects); the sandjaks are sub-divided into *cazas* (sub-districts, hundreds), the civil rulers of which are the *kaïmakams* (sub-prefects), and the *cazas* into *nahis* (parishes), governed by the *mudirs* (mayors).

under his jurisdiction of protecting robbers and bandits, and of having allowed himself to be bribed as often as three times to release notorious malefactors. "When I first came to Turkey," writes Major Trotter, "I used not to believe such stories; but now, alas! the evidence comes not from one place, but from several, and I am constrained to believe that such acts are of frequent occurrence throughout the country."⁽¹⁾

And this view will be strengthened by what follows. Everywhere, in fact at every step, the spirit of destruction and tyranny is seen at work in a thousand ways, any one alone of which, if experienced for a single day, would draw cries of revolt from the most patient of our Western populations. Thus the Agas or Beys (local magnates), who resemble in some degree the pillaging Lord of the Manor of the Middle Ages, are always accompanied, says a Consul, as followers, by a troop of ten to fifteen ruffians, who practise every kind of outrage,⁽²⁾ oppressing the Rayahs with enforced labour, outrages, exactions, and blows.⁽³⁾ Further, the Kurdish clans of the mountains, who fight amongst themselves, attack travellers, and are the means of preventing peasants from leaving their villages without being exposed to risk of being carried off, together with their flocks.⁽⁴⁾ Everywhere these savages are patronised by the Beys themselves, and are employed to punish the villagers who dare to resist these tyrants.⁽⁵⁾ As for the officials, the magistrates and the police, whose duty it should be to prevent this oppression, these are, only too often, found to be either accomplices or oppressors as well. A

(¹) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 10 (1879), page 46. Letter of 16th March, 1879.

(²) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 23 (1880), page 175.

(³) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 10 (1879), pp. 55, 108, 110, &c., P15, dispatch from Major Trotter; "It is useless entering into details of the thousand-and-one modes in which the Beys can, and generally do, oppress the Rayahs of their villages, forced labour and heavy and unlawful exactions of many kinds, both in money and produce, contemptuous and insulting language, often accompanied by blows, to the males, and too often by violation of the honour of the females. It can be easily understood that in a country where no law exists, where the feudal chiefs are possessed of almost absolute power over a race of people whom they both dislike and despise, that the state of the subject race is truly miserable."

(⁴) *Blue-Book*. *Ibid*, page 59. Report of fifty Mayors of the Canton of Midiad, pp. 61-63.

(⁵) Memorandum on the condition of the Christian inhabitants of the Geghi district, province of Erzeroum. Appendix to Major Trotter's dispatch of 28th June, 1879. *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 10 (1879), page 111: "Hadji Bey, as all other Beys, has under his patronage bands of wild Kurds, whom he employs to wreak revenge upon those who dare to resist him. They are, therefore, the terror of the poor villagers, whose all depends upon the good pleasure of the Bey; while the Imperial Government is often represented in those regions by corrupt officials, whose personal interests coincide with those of the Beys."

Prefect or Governor (Mutessarif) of a Sandjak, who took a journey in his district, availed himself of the opportunity to take thirty-six horses and 2,500 Turkish pounds (about 60,000 francs in gold), which he divided with the Medjliss (Administrative Councils).⁽¹⁾

The staff of Kaïmakams is subject to frequent changes. Five succeeded each other in the district of Midiad in the space of two years. Not one of them left office without going through his district and extorting money right and left under the most varied pretexts.⁽²⁾ The police, "insufficient and corrupt," is only an additional scourge.⁽³⁾ Besides, what can be expected from magistrates, officials, employés, and soldiers whose stipends and pay, in addition to being ridiculously low, are often only paid after months, and sometimes years, of delay?⁽⁴⁾ Matters, in fact, are so bad that one Governor was compelled at the approach of the Bairam festival to borrow, at the rate of 1 per cent. per week, sufficient to pay an instalment to the employés and Zaptiehs on account of the arrears of their pay.⁽⁵⁾ "There is no salvation possible for the Turkish Empire," an English agent very justly remarks, "so long as four years' arrears of pay are due to the Soldiers and two years' to the Zaptiehs. It is ridiculous to speak of the re-organisation of a Constabulary when care has not been taken to pay it regularly."⁽⁶⁾

Justice must be done to the attitude of the English Government during this period. In dealing both with his own agents and the Turkish Government, Lord Salisbury takes his stand on the ground of the treaties; in other words, on strict international law. The following is an instance.

In a letter dated Diarbekir, 24th April, 1879, Major Trotter asked to be enlightened on the following point: "Had he any right to interfere on behalf of the Christian subjects of the Porte, and if so, whence was this right derived?" "I may be mistaken," continued the Major, "but I imagine that, although the Pasha is bound as a matter of courtesy to reply to my communications, he is entitled to decline to listen to my advice, and even to deny my right to take any steps except for the

(1) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 10 (1879), page 57.

(2) *Ibid*, page 56.

(3) *Ibid*, page 116.

(4) At Diarbekir, Major Trotter meets a member of the Court of Appeal (Diwan-i-Temiz), whose monthly stipend of 380 piastres caïmé (equal to one Turkish pound of 23 francs) has not been paid for fourteen months. Fortunately, this honest magistrate supplements his income by practising as a dentist.

(5) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 4 (1880), page 82.

(6) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 10 (1879), page 104.

purpose of protecting British subjects. *In the firmans which have been granted me I find no reference to a more extensive right of interference.* . . .” Lord Salisbury’s reply is a peremptory refutation of this very restricted view. After having quoted the text of Article 61 of the Treaty of Berlin, and that of Article No. 1 of the Treaty of the 4th June, 1878, between Great Britain and Turkey, the British Minister continues: “In pursuance of these two stipulations, the Sultan is bound not only to promulgate new and better laws, but to *actually introduce* reforms in the Administration of the provinces situated in Major Trotter’s circle of observation. Any act contrary to the spirit of this engagement would supply ample material for remonstrance—in the first place by the Consul, afterwards, if requisite, by the Ambassador. Of course discretion must be used as regards the manner and suitability of these representations, and care must be taken not to act on information the accuracy of which may appear doubtful. But, subject to these precautions, Great Britain will spare no diplomatic effort to obtain good government on behalf of the populations of Asiatic Turkey.”⁽¹⁾

The Treaty of Berlin had been signed ten months, and, as we have just seen, the poor populations of Asiatic Turkey were as far from obtaining the *good government* which had been promised them as on the first day. As diplomacy was showing signs of impatience, the Porte hit upon a method of *gaining time* which has often served its purpose, and which since then it has on more than one occasion resorted to successfully. It sent into the Vilayet of Erzeroum a special commission “to inquire into the situation, to redress the evils from which the population is suffering, and to prepare a general plan of reforms.” This committee was composed of two members—Yussuf Pasha and Serkis Effendi.⁽²⁾ A month afterwards, Sir A. H. Layard sent the following dispatch to Lord Salisbury:⁽³⁾

“In consequence of the reports which I have received from Major Trotter and other trustworthy persons, and also the representations which have been made to me by the Armenian Patriarch, about the state of affairs in the Eastern provinces of Asiatic Turkey, the anarchy that prevails, the insecurity of life and property, the ill-treatment of the Christians, the general absence of good government, and the probable failure of the Commissions appointed by the Porte to redress the grievances complained of, I

(¹) Dispatch from the Marquis of Salisbury to Sir A. H. Layard, 21st May, 1879. *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 10 (1879), page 76.

(²) *Ibid*, pp. 76, 77. Dispatch of 12th May, 1879.

(³) *Ibid*, page 93. Dispatch of 12th June, 1879.

thought it time to make very serious representations to the Porte on the subject. I have accordingly given Sir Alfred Sandison⁽¹⁾ written directions, of which I beg to enclose copy herewith, with regard to the observations which I authorised him to make to Caratheodory Pasha. His Excellency having asked for a copy of this document, *pro memoria*, I authorised Sir A. Sandison to give him one.

"The Grand Vizir and Caratheodory Pasha are both perfectly aware of the deplorable condition of the provinces to which I have called their attention, and of the necessity of immediately taking efficient measures to put an end to it. My communication will serve to strengthen their position in the Council, where they meet with the most unscrupulous opposition.

"Unless the Porte takes care, and acts with prudence and forethought, there will some day be an Armenian question in Asia, similar to the Bulgarian question in Europe, from which the last war arose. The same intrigues are being resorted to in Asia Minor to establish an Armenian nationality, and to bring about a state of things which will cause a cry of horror amongst the Christian population, and a European intervention. I have warned Turkish Ministers various times that if they do not hasten to carry into effect the arrangements relating to the Armenians in the Treaty of Berlin and the Convention of June 4th, and also to take measures which are absolutely requisite for the protection of the Christians and for the better government of Asiatic Turkey, they will see too late that the Sultan may be compelled to lose some of them."

These words concerning the Turkish Government are undoubtedly both just and severe. There is no exception to be taken to them, save as regards the pretended "intrigues, the object of which is to establish an Armenian nationality." It is strange that a man so well acquainted with Eastern affairs as Sir A. H. Layard should think it proper to speak in such vague and uncharitable terms of the Armenian nationality, representing it as non-existent prior to 1878, and waiting, in order to be "established," for the success of the schemes of a handful of intriguer. It appears to me, on the contrary, that this nationality is one of the oldest and best established historical facts, and even to-day one of the most real, that exists in the world. It is not because it has pleased Turkish statesmen to erase the name of Armenia from their official geography, and to substitute for it that of Kurdistan, that the Armenian nationality has ceased to exist. Without speaking of the past, traditions of which still dwell in the memories, sustain the hopes, and cheer the hearts of this unfortunate people, have they not their language, their literature, their poetry, their religious rites; in short, their nation?

⁽¹⁾ Sir Alfred Sandison has been for several years Oriental Secretary to the British Embassy at Constantinople.

organisation solemnly recognised by the Ottoman Government itself? If persecution intensifies the attachment of its victims to these possessions, the only ones which are left to them,—if it arouses in them a keen desire, not only of personal security but also of collective autonomy to the extent granted by the treaties, on the same territory where their ancestors reigned, that is not the result of vulgar “intrigues,” but is a phenomenon which does honour to our nature, which misfortune stimulates, and the dream of which is not bounded by the mere satisfaction of the material wants of existence.

The following are the written instructions sent by the British Ambassador to Sir A. Sandison :—⁽¹⁾

“Call Caratheodory Pasha’s very serious attention to the state of affairs in Armenia and Eastern Anatolia. Universal anarchy and misgovernment appear to reign in these regions, and the reports which the Embassy receives about their condition are deplorable.

“Her Majesty’s Ambassador is sending to-day a memorandum on the state of the vilayet of Diarbekir. He has already acquainted Caratheodory Pasha with the sad condition of a part of this province.

“Her Majesty’s Government by no means intends under present circumstances to press the Porte to apply to their full extent the reforms which the latter has promised to make in the administration of the Asiatic provinces of Turkey.

“But Her Majesty’s Government cannot forget the obligations which Turkey has contracted in Article 61 of the Treaty of Berlin. Consequently Her Majesty’s Government desires to warn the Porte very seriously of the dangers which it runs by allowing the present state of anarchy to continue, by not affording the Christian populations sufficient protection, and by at least not beginning the reforms which it engaged to introduce without delay in one or two provinces of Anatolia.”

A few days afterwards, on the 23rd June, 1879, Sir A. H. Layard went himself to see the Grand Vizir and Caratheodory Pasha, and explained to them in a conversation, of which he gave an account to Lord Salisbury, “not only the importance, but the absolute necessity, of commencing to carry into effect in Asiatic Turkey the reforms which the Sultan engaged with Her Majesty’s Government to introduce in this part of his dominions.” *Nothing has been done in this respect.* The Christians ask protection for their lives and property, and equality of treatment with the Mussulmans. Numerous documents show the anarchy which prevails in a large part of Asia Minor, and the outrages committed both on the Mussulmans and the Christians by the Circassians, the Kurds,

(¹) *Blue-Book. Ibid.*, page 94.

and other vagabonds. In many places the local authorities are sincerely desirous of putting an end to this state of things, but cannot do so for want of a proper police force. In spite of the repeated assurances of the Grand Vizir, no steps appear to have been taken for the formation of an effective constabulary. Once again, if a beginning could be made, were it only in one province, it would be some proof of the earnest intention of the Porte to execute the treaty.⁽¹⁾

The Grand Vizir and Caratheodory Pasha replied exactly as follows; they began by *admitting unreservedly* that the Ambassador's complaints were *well founded*.⁽²⁾ The Grand Vizir declared that he was ready to immediately begin, not in one, but three provinces of Asia, the special reforms to which reference had been made. They were already under consideration. Want of money was the only serious obstacle to the introduction of some essential reforms, such as the organisation of the Constabulary. But a financial scheme was under consideration which, if it turned out as was anticipated, would provide the Porte with the requisite resources.

Weeks passed away, and complaints again rolled in. On the 12th of July there was a fresh official communication from the British Ambassador, calling for the most active measures to be taken for the defence of the Armenian subjects in Kurdistan. "It unfortunately appears," he said, "that in certain districts, and particularly in that of Gönig, the only authority at present existing is that of the Kurdish Agas and Beys, who make use of it to plunder, outrage, and oppress the unfortunate Christians placed under their control."⁽³⁾

On the 17th of July there was another note, complaining that, contrary to the express promise of Safvet Pasha, the name of no European appears in the list of appointments of law officers and inspectors of provincial tribunals made by the Minister of Justice.⁽⁴⁾ On the same day Major Trotter writes that the Commissioners, well-meaning men themselves, but badly advised, "have been appointing to high judicial posts men, some of whom I know personally to be of the most objectionable character."⁽⁵⁾ On the 19th of July and the 6th of August, Lieutenant-Colonel Wilson, Consul-General in Anatolia, sends reports from Kaisaryeh and Sivas, describing the condition of the surrounding countries—that is

(1) *Blue-Book*. *Ibid*, page 100.

(2) "They fully admitted that my complaints were well founded."

(3) *Ibid*, page 106.

(4) *Ibid*, page 118.

(5) *Ibid*, page 121.

to say, Minor Armenia—as being as bad as possible. To all the other evils is superadded the obligation of supporting numerous Circassian refugees. “Nothing,” says the Consul-General, “can justify what the Turkish Government did last year in suddenly letting loose a body of armed men on this country, which is inhabited by quite an inoffensive population, unaccustomed to bear arms.”⁽¹⁾

What were Commissioners Yussuf Pasha and Serkis Effendi doing in the meantime? An official report from the British Embassy, dated 8th August, 1879, tells us that “the Commissioners sent by the Sublime Porte were at first disposed to execute the mission confided to them with energy and loyalty, but the difficulties and obstructions which have been placed in their way, the opposition they have received from the local authorities, the want of support from Constantinople, and the limited nature of their powers, have ended by disheartening them, and there is unfortunately reason to fear that they will be unable to carry out the benevolent intentions of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, and so improve the condition of his Christian subjects.”⁽²⁾

The Consular Reports bear out this statement only too fully. They show us how the originally extensive powers of the Commissioners are gradually diminished by counter orders from Constantinople, just as it is seen that they take their mandate seriously. Thus the power which they had of choosing the Vice-Presidents and members of the new civil and criminal Courts, to dismiss the old members of the Administrative Council in the vilayet, incapable and corrupt officials of a rank inferior to the Mutessarif, and to improve the system of collecting rates and taxes, is withdrawn from them, and transferred to a large extent to the Vali (Governor). No notice is taken of the greater part of their proposals, whilst the result of the others is fallacious, and the English Consul anticipates that the few brigands which they have had imprisoned will soon succeed in escaping by bribing their gaolers.⁽³⁾

If the abuses continue under the eyes of the Commissioners, the condition of the remote parts of the country may be imagined. On the 2nd August, 1879, Captain Clayton writes from Mush, where he arrived three days before, that “he has already been told of a sufficient number of crimes and misdemeanours to fill a book, and that he has reason to

(1) *Ibid*, page 126.

(2) *Ibid*. Turkey, No. 4 (1880), page 15.

(3) *Blue-Book*. *Ibid*, page 4.

believe in the truth of the greater part of these stories." "Some of the worst cases," he says, "were related to me by an European surgeon in the Turkish service, as having come under his personal observation; and I have myself been able to notice the abject terror with which the Christian population regard the Kurds, the Turks, and the authorities."⁽¹⁾ Captain Clayton gives the following instances:—

"It is barely three weeks since a noted Kurdish chief, Mirza Bey, beat nearly to death the head man of an Armenian village, because he had been recently elected without his sanction; yet Mirza Bey walks freely about the town, and is an honoured visitor in the Serai and Medjliss. But, unfortunately, it is not only the Kurds who misbehave, but also the officers and men of the regular troops and Zaptiehs, who continually make irregular demands upon the villagers, and beat and ill-treat them if they are unable to satisfy their demands.

"Justice, also, as a rule, miscarries. A caravan of Armenians, returning to Van from Constantinople with their earnings, were attacked last year by Kurds near Boulanik, and robbed of 6,000 Turkish pounds (nearly 140,000 francs). They have endeavoured to obtain redress, the robbers being well known, and have been able to obtain an order from Van for the arrest and punishment of the offenders; but the latter, with so much money at their command, have hitherto escaped scot-free, though one of them has been recently re-arrested, and is now in prison here.

"Only a few days ago an Armenian set out for Erzeroum with letters for the Bishop of Mush, containing reports of grievances. His body was found murdered near Ischarbuhur; but when his son went to fetch it, it had disappeared, together with the letters.

"Even darker crimes of lust and brutality are also spoken of as of not unfrequent occurrence.

"The Vekil of the Mutessarif, and other officials with whom I have spoken, express the best sentiments and intentions, and I hope they are sincere in their professions. The Vekil I believe to be a man of good intentions, but he is only here temporarily, and the Mussulman population is extremely fanatical, and corruption seems to reign supreme.

"The main causes of complaint on the part of the Armenian population are: that they have to pay taxes both to the Kurds and to the Government; abuses in the collection of the Government taxes; the maltreatment they suffer from Kurds, Turks, soldiery, and zaptiehs; and the impunity with which any Moslem can commit any sort of crime or wrong against them."

Was the district of Mush in an exceptionally unfortunate situation? Or had Captain Clayton a tendency to exaggerate facts? This is what another Consular agent, Lieutenant Kitchener, writes on the 3rd of September, 1879, in reference to another district, Ada-Bazar, situated

(1) *Blue-Book. Ibid*, page 28.

not in the Armenian provinces, but in the western part of Asia Minor, at a short distance from Constantinople:—

“I have received a large number of petitions, from Mahommedans as well as Christians, with reference to the outrages committed in this district by Circassians.

“The result of these cases appears to be that the Circassians rob with impunity upon the public roads and in houses, occasionally using violence; that they drive the owners of land off their properties, and take the harvest; at the same time the proprietors have to pay taxes to the Government on land they cannot visit. In some parts agriculture is quite stopped, the Circassians having robbed the people of all their horses and cattle, and occupied their land. The inhabitants of several villages declare they can no longer exist if this state of things continues.

“—, Mussulman, of the village of Molakeui, states he has been robbed of all he possessed by the Circassians, who have ruined his village; though he knows the offenders, the Government will do nothing. He further states that he was to-day put in prison because he was coming to complain of his case.

“—, Armenian, of the village of Agatchilli, states: Six weeks ago he was stopped on the road by seven Circassians, who robbed him of his horse, clothes, and 7,000 piastres. Fifteen days ago he bought a horse, which was stolen next day. Twelve days ago, with three others, he was robbed on the road in day-time by seven Circassians, and was left naked. Seven days ago the Circassians entered his house by night, and cleared him out completely. He states he is now ruined. The Government have taken no steps.

“—, Mahommedan woman, from Karyalla, states she was robbed of all she had, and her husband killed. The Circassians were taken, and she was able to prove the case, but they have been allowed to escape.

“—, Armenian, of Ada-Bazar, has been robbed in the last year of five horses, with merchandise. He found Circassians, but nothing was done. One month ago Circassians stole his cow at Sabanja; his brother was beaten to death. Last Tuesday, with others, he was attacked on the road by seven Circassians, and robbed of all he possessed. Case was proved in court, but the robbers have since been let out of prison.

“—, one of the richest Armenians of Ada-Bazar, had his shop broken open last Sunday, and was robbed of 540 liras. He declares he cannot get justice.

“The people of the village of Ferizli state their fields are occupied by Circassians; they cannot work, and have to pay taxes. They know the Circassians well, but can get no justice. Long list of cows, buffaloes, and horses stolen.

“Deputation from Yeni-Keui to the same effect.

“Deputation (two Christians and one Mussulman) from Sheikler,⁽¹⁾ to same effect,” &c., &c.

I stop for fear of wearing out the patience of the reader. In the dispatch of Lieutenant Kitchener, and many others, the same sadly monotonous narration of complaints continues. And each tale of robbery

(¹) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 4 (1880), page 49.

concludes with the words "the Government does nothing—nothing," or else, "a trial was begun and completed, but, after arrested the guilty parties, the authorities released them or condoned their flight." Who, then, are these authorities? In the district of Bazar, which is the subject of my remarks, the highest local authority is the Kaïmakam. Now, this Kaïmakam is a Circassian, and the force under his orders consists of one or two Zaptiehs, also Circassians.

Even when the Turkish Government, yielding to diplomatic pressure, pretends to move, its efforts are, as a rule, so ill-directed, or its measures are so bad, that the only result is an aggravation of the evil. The regular troops sent to protect the environs of Bitlis against the incursions of the Modki Kurds are commanded by Mirza Bey, who is himself a Kurdish chief "of notoriously bad character," says Captain Layard. The men are "as wicked as the Kurds themselves." They are brutal to the villagers, who are paid nothing, and whom they plunder, whilst their commander takes no notice of the complaints which are made to him.⁽²⁾ Another report speaks of 144 villages destroyed, 100 Christian—by the Kurds, and the remainder by the troops. The object is to re-establish order. The only real object of a military expedition of this kind appears to be to collect the taxes due from the Kurds. The inhabitants are certain that as soon as the troops have left, they will find from them that the Kurds will wring the amount of their own taxes.

Sometimes a military expedition of this kind is only a wretched game played by the Kurdish chiefs and the Governors who are supposed to be entrusted with the task of subduing them. Whilst the Sultan sends a telegram communicating to the British Ambassador,—who thanks him for the news, and hastens to send the happy news to London,—a telegram announcing the submission of the Kurds, and adding that the most complete tranquillity reigns everywhere.⁽⁴⁾ The truth is that there has been no submission, and an exchange of compliments between the Governor-General, the

(1) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 4 (1880), page 50.

(2) *Ibid*, page 53.

(3) *Ibid*, page 168.

(4) See Turkey, No. 4 (1880), pp. 149 and 150, Samih Pasha's telegram to the British Ambassador (14th November, 1879) stating that "the commander of the troops has returned after having accomplished his mission; that there is perfect submission and obedience to the orders of the Government; that general order and public tranquillity are re-established;" and adding that "the result is not the result of my feeble efforts, but rather of the wise steps ordered by His Majesty." See *Ibid*, the dispatch of Sir A. H. Layard to the Marquis of Salisbury (14th September) sending the translation of the telegram, and saying that the Ambassador has thanked and congratulated His Majesty the Sultan.

of the telegram, and the chiefs of the brigands, and that the latter, instead of being punished, have been rewarded with money and honours.⁽¹⁾

We have seen that the dispatch of Commissioners has no better effect. If some among them wish to *act* with any energy, their zeal is reprimanded by the Porte.⁽²⁾ The petty local magnates, on their part, do everything they can to bribe them, or, if they resist, to thwart their mission.⁽³⁾ If there are Christians amongst them, they are boycotted by the officials and the upper class of Turks.⁽⁴⁾ The authorities openly oppose them.⁽⁵⁾ Thus the best-intentioned lose courage in the long run,

(1) *Blue-Book. Ibid*, page 151, letter appended to the dispatch of Sir A. H. Layard, of 17th November, 1879. "Samih Pasha, who was said to be entrusted with the punishment of the Sheik-Abdullah and his accomplices, appears to have quite a different mission. It is reported at Van that he has sent the Sheik a decoration, a sword of honour, and money. He has laden with honours several Kurdish chiefs who deserved hanging. The sanguinary Moussa is amongst the number. . . ." What is only stated here with a certain amount of reserve ("it is reported") is repeated as absolutely true in a memorandum from Major Trotter (2nd October, 1880. *Blue-Book. Turkey*, 6, 1881, page 193), who adds that on the other hand "a District Governor has been dismissed for having acted too energetically against the rebels, and thus incurred the displeasure of their chief. The influence of the Sheikh Ubeidullah, the chief instigator of the rebellion, is such that, for several miles round, it is to him, and not to the Turkish Government, that Kurds and Christians pay the amount of their taxes. Moreover, it is he, and not the Turkish Government, who protects them against the raids of other Kurdish tribes and the brigands who come from the Persian frontier." We shall refer subsequently to the Moussa Bey, who is mentioned at the commencement of the present note.

(2) See letter appended to the dispatch of Sir A. H. Layard, of 9th December, 1879. Commissioners rebuked for having driven bad characters from the region of Diarbekir and Mardin. *Blue-Book. Ibid*, page 182.

(3) Letter written from Kerassonde, by Vice-Consul Billiotti, 1st October, 1880. *Blue-Book*, No. 6 (1881), page 219: "The Porte sent here, as special delegate, a certain Mehmed Effendi, to whom the Agas offered a bribe of 400 pounds (8,800 francs), which he refused to accept. They then prevented the peasants repairing to the town, and he was so plagued by the Agas when he proceeded himself to the villages, that Mehmed Effendi, quite disgusted, returned to Constantinople, without having fulfilled his mission."

(4) The following occurs in the above-mentioned letter on the subject of the attitude of the authorities towards a Christian Commissioner, Mannas Effendi: "From the first Turkish officials and Turks of the higher class kept aloof from him. He showed himself to be honest and very energetic, but he is a *giaour*."

(5) The Christian Commissioner, Mannas Effendi, asks for the schedules relating to the tithes and other taxes for the purpose of examination; the Mutessarif (the chief of the district) forbids the offices where these documents are kept to part with them. Mannas Effendi forms a committee of inquiry, of which he is chairman. The Mutessarif forbids the members of the committee to attend the sittings. Mannas Effendi, who lodges in a private house, occupies, like his predecessor, an office in the Government buildings. The Mutessarif sends him word that he has no business there, and orders him to leave the premises. As Mannas Effendi refuses

confronted as they are by ill-will and universal corruption at every step in the administrative and governmental ladder. The others deliberately try to stifle the truth. Witness the Commission sent in 1879 to the district of Geghi, whose strange proceedings are described in an official note sent to the Porte by the British Ambassador, Sir A. H. Layard.⁽¹⁾ This Commission, consisting of four Mussulmans and two Christians, was officially appointed to hold an inquiry respecting acts of brigandage of which certain Beys were accused, particularly in the village of Hor-Hor, to protect the oppressed population and redress their grievances. On his arrival, the Binbashi (an officer whose rank is equivalent to that of Major), who presided over the Commission, called a meeting of the inhabitants, and in a violent speech reprimanded them for having dared to complain. As the villagers persisted in their complaints, and declared that Hadji Bey forced them to work for him, to serve him, even on Sundays, and that he appropriated their cattle, the justice-loving Binbashi treated their accusations with supreme contempt, and did nothing but give angry retorts to those who formulated them. Then he summoned the plaintiffs to attend the following day. The unfortunate villagers having refused to appear because it was a Sunday, the impartial Binbashi sent them to prison. They were only released on the interference of the Kaïmakam, and on finding bail. During this time the Mussulman members of the Commission, with the honest Binbashi at their head, were received as guests by those very Beys, the accusations against whom they were to examine.⁽²⁾

In one report we are told that one of the most powerful causes of the influence of the Beys in high places lies in the fact *that they sell Circassian*

to obey this order, the Mutessarif devises another means of annoying him : he gets an order from the Idaré Medjliss (Administrative Council of the vilayet) to the police authorities, forbidding them to execute any orders of arrest issued by the Commissioner, and even depriving the latter of the Zaptiehs attached to his person. To crown all, the Mutessarif solemnly ordered the prison doors to be opened, and all the prisoners arrested by the predecessor of Mannas Effendi to be set at liberty. Now, a great number of these individuals had been examined before the Commission, and found guilty of serious offences. The papers relating to them were in the hands of the Court, pending sentence being passed. The trial of the others was in progress. This was finally the upshot of the matter : the reactionary Mutessarif was promoted, having been appointed Vali of Mosul, whilst Mannas Effendi was recalled to Constantinople. (Report of Major Trotter. *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 23 (1880), page 66.)

(¹) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 4 (1880), page 50.

(²) *Blue-Book*. *Ibid*.

girls to the Pashas at Constantinople.⁽¹⁾ Backed up by these protectors, they despise the local authorities, only appear before the Courts to bully the judges, pass through the towns with numerous escorts (as many as 150 men, mounted and armed), and snap their fingers at the police.

The immigration of Circassians or Tcherkesses, who came after the war, some from Roumelia and Bulgaria, and others from the environs of Tschelder and Kars, together with that of the Turks, Terekemes, and Lazes, who preferred the licence which they hoped to enjoy on Ottoman territory to the regular and Christian government of Russia, was in itself a sufficient scourge to require the undivided attention of any Government animated by a sense of duty. Seeing, however, the manner in which the Turkish authorities behaved, one is tempted to ask whether some of them did not conceive the abominable idea of ruining and decimating the Christian population, by leaving the new arrivals without any resource save plunder.

According to Lieutenant Kitchener, the district of Ada-Bazar alone—

(1) Report of Lieutenant Kitchener, Ada-Bazar, 29th August, 1879. *Blue-Book* above mentioned, page 39. It appears from various letters that the possession and the sale of slaves, especially as instruments of pleasure, must still be frequent in the East, and that numerous abductions of girls and boys are committed almost openly for this purpose. (See *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 10 (1879), page 71, a memorandum from the Armenian Protestant community of Amasia.) We read there that in one of these cases of abduction the President of the tribunal before which it was brought had himself just bought from one of the accused Beys a boy and a girl for the sum of 5,000 piastres in caimé. (*C. F.* Turkey, No. 4 (1880), pp. 141, 142. *Ibid*, No. 23 (1880), page 30.) The case referred to here is the sale of a boy and girl from Amasia, to Fikri Bey, member of a court of justice. In another *Blue-Book* (Turkey, No. 6 (1881), page 4) a report from Captain Stewart, British Vice-Consul at Kaysarieh, tells us that in the district of Azizeh alone there are two thousand Tcherkess slaves, who are constantly bought and sold, and who serve to keep the harems of Stamboul partly supplied. The price of the men ranges from 20 to 30 Turkish pounds (from 460 to 700 francs), and that of the women from 20 to 100, or even 120 pounds (nearly 2,800 francs), according to their beauty. On the 21st June, 1880, there was a regular battle at Azizeh between twenty-six fugitive slaves and their owners. One of the owners and one of the slaves were killed. Six of the latter were re-captured; two disappeared; seventeen succeeded in reaching Sivas, where they were arrested and thrown into prison by order of the Governor. Let us remember that it is not in the kingdom of Dahomey that all this took place, but in an empire which since 1856 has been solemnly allowed to participate in the benefits of European public law and concert. International conferences, both diplomatic and philanthropic, are about to meet to consider measures for the suppression of slavery in Africa. Nothing assuredly could be more praiseworthy. But in the face of facts like those of which I have just spoken, it would be leaving their work incomplete if they did not also devote attention to the *effectual* suppression of slavery in the Ottoman Empire; it will, in fact, make the position of the white men and women still worse, since by a natural consequence the traffic in them will offer an allurements all the stronger to the lust of the Pashas and the greed of the Beys, by reason of the difficulty of getting supplies elsewhere.

the urban population of which is estimated at 11,800, including 8,000 Armenians, and the rural population at 17,000—received on one occasion 25,000 to 30,000 Circassians, coming, some from Asiatic Turkey and others from Sukkum Kalé, in Asia.⁽¹⁾ In the month of October, 1879, the Vali of Erzeroum informed Major Trotter that about 10,000 families, making a total of 50,000 to 60,000 persons, were expected from Kars, Ardahan, and Koghynan.⁽²⁾ At the same time, the *Kavkas*, a St. Petersburg newspaper, stated that the number of emigrants who had left Kars since the occupation of that town by the Russians, amounted already, on the 1/13 October, 1879, to 41,691.⁽³⁾ The district of Dudscheh alone, which contains 37,000 inhabitants, was invaded by 25,000 Circassians.⁽⁴⁾ In less than three months, from the 5th of April to the 29th of June, 1879, according to a very full report from Mr. Marengo, British Vice-Consul at Trebizond, Turkish vessels had brought from Batoum to different ports on the Turkish coast of the Black Sea—principally Trebizond, Samsoun, and Ugna—5,933 Lazan emigrants.⁽⁵⁾ This movement continued and increased during 1880. In that year there were several arrivals of 1,000, 1,500, and even 3,000 each.⁽⁶⁾ On a single day in September, 1880, Major Trotter met hundreds on the way to Van.⁽⁷⁾ At the same time, during a journey on horseback on the road from Sivas to Erzizian, Lieutenant Chermiside counted as many as 600 Arabas following the same route as he himself, whilst numbers of others appeared on both sides of the horizon.⁽⁸⁾ One might imagine that the age of the migration of nations had returned. All the male immigrants arrived armed, in the midst of a defenceless population, and without the Turkish Government having made the slightest attempt to provide them with either the means of shelter or sustenance. Lieutenant-Colonel Wilson denounces this as an “almost criminal action.”⁽⁹⁾

On this occasion, it is true, Refugee Commissioners were appointed. But what did they do? Although a small number conscientiously did their duty, the only object of the remainder was to make capital out of the situation. They extorted money from the villagers by threatening to quarter the refugees in their neighbourhood. They extorted it from

(1) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 4 (1880), pp. 38, 39.

(2) *Ibid*, page 90.

(3) Letter from Lord Dufferin, Ambassador at St. Petersburg. *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 23 (1880), page 66.

(4) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 6 (1880), page 55.

(5) *Ibid*. No. 4 (1880), page 26.

(6) *Ibid*. No. 6 (1881), pp. 23 and 44.

(7) *Ibid*. Page 115.

(8) *Ibid*. Page 169.

(9) *Ibid*. No. 4 (1880), page 113.

the refugees by threatening to put them upon barren ground. In this way one of them obtained in the district of Amasia alone at least 4,000 Turkish pounds (upwards of 90,000 francs).⁽¹⁾

I do not know whether there exists another country in the world where the Government has enticed into its own provinces hordes of barbarians, and then, through carelessness or perversity, left them no alternative but to live by plunder of others from hunger. The facts which I have just cited, and a number of the instinctive repugnance of the Mussulmans to light on this act. At first sight it might be thought that it was only an inevitable result of the disorder which must ensue from such a migration. Empire, a result of the Turkish authorities would still be guilty of having done living under so, the Government of Russia or that of emancipated Bulgaria. If it were so, the Government of Turkey herself. The English Vice-Consul Stewart, in a large extent, by Turkey herself. The English Vice-Consul batch of these emigrants—240 Arnaut peasants from Kossova—arrive at them suffering from fever. No provision had been made for their long journey. In some villages of these emigrants had died of hunger. Others seemed about to succumb. The Consul asked them why they had left their country. At first they replied, "How could they live under a Christian Government?" But on being questioned more closely, some of them said: "They were compelled to leave by Government officials." The Consul adds: "That this last answer is the true one, is probable, the population here, and being desirous of strengthening the Mahomedans living under Christian rule."⁽²⁾

In October, 1880, Mr. St. John, Secretary to the British Embassy at Constantinople, visited several encampments of refugees on the shores of the Gulfs of Ismid and Moudanieh, a few hours' journey from Constantinople. They were Georgians from the neighbourhood of Batoum. The had emigrated to the number of 7,000, in transports supplied by the Turkish Government. Their distress was appalling. Out of 1,400 wh

⁽¹⁾ Blue-Book. Turkey, No. 4 (1880), page 113.
⁽²⁾ Blue-Book. Turkey, No. 6 (1881), page 89.

had landed two months and a half previously at Ismid, 211 had already succumbed to starvation or fever. The greater part had no shelter but trees, and no food but fruit, principally quinces, which they picked up on the roads. It was the Turkish Government that had enticed them. Questioned by Mr. St. John, one of their Mollahs admitted that the Russian Government treated them well; but he showed a prospectus in which the most alluring promises were made them in the name of the Turkish Government: viz., rations of bread for a year, well-paid employment on the State farms, grants of land, of seed, and agricultural implements; they were to be established in separate villages, and would have money advanced to build houses, mosques, schools, to provide teachers, &c.⁽¹⁾

In the face of such testimony, how can the conviction be resisted that, even after making the largest possible allowance for the force and difficulty of circumstances, if the immigration, so far as many of these unfortunate people were concerned, was the result of an instinctive dislike on their part to Christian rule, its importance was increased, and the consequences singularly aggravated, by the negligence, the unwillingness, and, let us say the word, the gross deceit of the Turkish authorities? It could not but be foreseen that this rude and ignorant body of immigrants, arriving quite unprovided with the necessaries of life in a country where no preparation had been made to receive them, would obey no other law but that of self-preservation, and that in order to live they would rob and kill wherever they had the chance. That being the case, the Turkish authorities ought to have done one of two things: either discourage immigration, or organise it in such a way as to throw the burden on the entire country. Instead of that, what is it the authorities do? They encourage immigration, but do not trouble themselves about either the immigrants, the landowners and tenants, or the struggle for life which inevitably arises amongst them. Still worse, when one of the parties, exhausted, attempts to leave the spot, either to return home or to emigrate in its turn, the Turkish authorities devote all the energy they can muster to thwarting this salutary movement. It might be said that the rulers are secretly pleased at a condition of mutual extermination, and that they see in it the best chance of salvation for their wretched Empire. In a memorandum presented to the Porte by the British Ambassador, on the 16th August, 1880, about the state of the districts of

(¹) Report of Mr. St. John, 11th October, 1880. *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 6 (1881), page 198.

Ada-Bazar and Dudschah, we read: "One of the Abbaze chiefs admitt that if more refugees were brought into the province it would become perfect hell. The condition of those who are already there is so bad th they have tried to obtain permission to return to Russia, but in van The Armenian and Turkish villages visited by Major Warlow seemed be in a wretched condition. Everywhere he was told the same stories robbery and insecurity, and of the weakness and apathy of the authoriti On asking people why they did not represent their case to the authoriti the invincible answer was that it was no use, for that even when robbe were caught and brought to trial they were never punished. T Kaimakam, who is new to his post, himself seems hardly aware of tl state of things. He arrived at Ada-Bazar during Major Warlow's st there. In speaking of the province, he described it as in a satisfacti condition. This, however, can hardly be his opinion, for Major Warl anyone who gave him information as to the true state of affairs."⁽¹⁾

On the other hand, when some Christians in the vilayet of Trebizon being brought to the verge of extreme misery by the invasion of t Laz immigrants, show a desire to emigrate towards Russia, the Turki authorities object. Those who wish to leave in spite of this oppositio are compelled to go to the vicinity of the Black Sea and watch for opportunity to embark by stealth on some Turkish vessel. Sometim they have to wait so long that their entire resources are exhauste. Sometimes the vessel, they find, is manned by regular pirates. Cases of this sort are related in numerous dispatches from the same villag Trebizond—Mr. Biliotti. For instance, there is a story of eight Gre families, consisting of thirty-seven persons belonging to the owner a captain of which are known on board a Turkish vessel, the place wh embarked (the port of Djilar), after being robbed by the captain a crew of all their money and effects.⁽²⁾ This act and a hundred others the same description may be followed by any prosecution. Let us therefore inqu Whatever indignation may be inspired by such acts, and the impuni enjoyed by their perpetrators, it may be asked whether they do not ar from exceptional and temporary circumstances.

⁽¹⁾ Blue-Book. Turkey, No. 6 (1881), page 118.

⁽²⁾ *Ibid*, page 101.

what Turkish government is in its normal state. Let us search the official reports, and see how, from 1878 to 1881, in the provinces under Treaty protection, the finances of the Empire were managed; how justice was administered; how the police guarded the security of the citizens; how, in short, central and local government was conducted in these provinces. We shall have to inquire subsequently what Europe has done to alter this state of things, and whether since 1881 there have been any signs of improvement.

1st. *Financial Administration*.—The Consular reports mention on all sides crying abuses in the collection of the taxes, particularly tithes. Captain Everett, Vice-Consul at Erzeroum, writes on this subject as follows:—

“With regard to the collection of the taxes, it is only patience, or fear, or the want of coherence between the different factions, that can have prevented the people in the Eastern districts from rising to a man against the Government during the last year. Half ruined by the war, and lately reduced to beggary and starvation by the failure of the crops, the unfortunate people have nevertheless been inexorably pursued by the taxgatherers, and imprisoned by the authorities when unable to pay, and this notwithstanding that the Government owed many of these same people considerable sums of money for supplies furnished during the war. True it is, the Porte ordered this to be paid. Tempted by this order, one or two villages handed their receipts to the local authorities, and received about one-fifth of the amount due to them.

“Both last year, and again this year, the tithes of the districts of Thortum, Giskin, and Ispir have been bought by a company, members of the Government at Erzeroum. This wheat will be sold in the winter, as it was last year, at exorbitant rates.

“The collection of the sheep tax in the present year was a notoriously iniquitous proceeding. Enormous numbers of sheep perished in the spring owing to want of food, but no allowance was made for them.

“The blame for this unjust and merciless taxation rests principally with the Supreme Government. The Porte perpetually sends to the Vali for money. The request is passed on to the Mutessarifs, and from the Mutessarifs to the Kaïmakam. The demand is generally accompanied by a threat, that if the money is not forthcoming the official is likely to lose his position, and the latter, perfectly aware of this method of procedure, guards against it by making as much as he can from the people and the Government during his uncertain tenure. To rob the people is no crime, for every man's hand is against them. To rob the Government needs only discretion and money. So long as sufficient payment is made in the right place there is seldom any objection. Now and then an official pushes matters a little too far. He then, if he is wise, gives in his resignation, pays a handsome *bakshish* out of his ill-gotten

gains for another appointment in a neighbouring vilayet, and re-commences on a new sphere of action."⁽¹⁾

All who know Turkey are aware that if the inhabitants had merely to pay the net amount of taxes levied, the burden would be endurable under an honest and intelligent administration. But the people, particularly in the Armenian provinces, are ground down by the supplementary exactions of all kinds to which, in addition to the robbery of the Kurds and the tyranny of the Agas, they are subjected by the Government itself, or its agents. Thus, particularly in the vilayet of Erzeroum soldiers, zaptiehs, and officials, when travelling, do not scruple to quarter themselves on the inhabitants, either for these requisitions, or if on themselves no receipt is given in exchange for the value actually supplied. Moreover, as a rule no receipt is given in the field, or they will only allow for the considerably less amount the tax collectors will allow no deduction to be made from the taxes due during the war for the requisition receipts given at the same rate as the troops in the field, or they will only allow for themselves do not always give receipts for the taxes they collect, and avail themselves of this omission to claim payment a second time, (course to themselves of the impoverished of the rural populations, the summer Minor, and particularly the Armenian provinces. In addition to all the other causes of the impoverishment of the rural populations, the summer was exceptionally dry, and in several districts there was a plague of locusts. The Kurds having stolen considerable quantities of cattle, agricultural implements, and hard cash, less land was cultivated, and as in this restricted area the very insignificant part of the crops made no maturity. With the onset of winter, the effects of the dearth made themselves felt with unprecedented severity. Entire districts were literally wanting bread. The poor were compelled to wander about literally wanting bread.

(1) Report sent from Erzeroum on the 23rd Sept., 1880, by Vice-Consul Everett. *Blue-Book*, No. 6 (1881), page 185. I shall again have occasion to quote from this remarkable report, in which the author was specially complimented by the Foreign Secretary, Lord Granville.

(2) *Blue-Book*, *ibid.*, page 215.

(3) Report of Captain Stewart, *Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 23 (1880), page 112.

Milotti, Consul at Trebizond, No. 6 (1881), page 102. *Ibid.*, from M.

the mountains gathering wild herbs and roots, and the rich to slaughter and salt a portion of the flocks which formed the best part of their farming capital. Disease, the inevitable result of this state of things, broke out. The mortality was frightful. People died of starvation—at first by hundreds, but afterwards by thousands. Some fell by the roadside, and their bodies could be seen by wayfarers, unburied, and half devoured by dogs.⁽¹⁾

A terrible outcry of distress was raised, and reached the charitable circles of Constantinople and Europe. Relief committees were formed amongst the Armenians and Turks of Constantinople. At London, Lady Strangford started a subscription, which realised a large sum, the distribution of which was undertaken by the English Consuls and missionaries.⁽²⁾

But these praiseworthy impulses of charity, the effects of which could only be felt after the lapse of several months, only sufficed to mitigate to a very small extent the ravages of the scourge. Before any aid had arrived it was announced that, besides others, there were six villages, between Van and Bashkaleh, where fifty-five persons had died of starvation; and another group of nine villages, in the district of Alashgerd, where 109 persons had succumbed.⁽³⁾ A Consular document of 2nd October, 1880, estimates the number of the victims of the famine at at least 10,000 in the district of Bashkaleh, at 2,000 to 3,000 in the

(1) See reports on the famine by Major Trotter, *Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 23 (1880), page 12; *ibid*, 6 (1881), pp. 82-84. Captain Everett, *Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 23 (1880), pp. 22, 62, 76, 113, 145. Captain Clayton, *Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 23 (1880), pp. 23, 49, 103, 131, 134. *Blue-Book*, No. 6 (1881), page 180. Report by the Rev. Robert Chambers to Captain Everett, *Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 23 (1880), page 78. *Ibid*, by the Central Armenian Committee, *Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 6 (1881), page 134.

(2) According to a letter from Major Trotter to Lady Strangford, dated 23rd July, 1880, the funds received from the English committees up to that time amounted to £4,350, or 108,750 francs. This sum does not include considerable amounts sent by the Turkish committees to the Vali, and by the Armenian committees to local relief societies, nor 2,500 francs sent by the Jewish Alliance of Paris and by Baron de Hirsch, to be specially devoted to the relief of the Jews in Armenia. (*Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 6, 1881, page 82.) Referring to the Armenians, Captain Clayton writes from Van on the 7th of May, 1880: "I think it right to say that the Armenian Charitable Committee here have been working extremely well, and the measures taken by them seem to me to be very judicious." (*Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 23, 1880, page 234.) According to a report of the Central Armenian Committee to the Patriarch Nercès, that body distributed more than 500,000 francs, of which one quarter was devoted to the relief of distressed Syrians, Chaldeans, Greeks, Turks, and Kurds.

(3) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 23 (1880), page 111; *ibid*, page 145.

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neighbourhood of Bayazid and Alashgerd, and the same number or (the precise figures are wanting) at Midiad, Bohtan, and Djez besides several hundreds who perished on the roads, after leaving villages in quest of food.⁽¹⁾

This is the moment chosen by the Turkish Government to derange the villages' arrears of taxes from the districts which had suffered by the war. "Everywhere," writes one Consul, "the Zaptiehs are on." At Bashkaleh, the Government even tries to raise the tax advance. It demands the sheep tax from the owners of sheep that been stolen by the Kurds,⁽²⁾ or of land that has been appropriated by the immigrant Circassians.⁽³⁾ "Money given for relief has been times seized for taxes."⁽⁴⁾ That is not all; the Government decrees from the 1st of March, 1888, coins of five piastres (beshlik) and me bronze money shall not be accepted in payment of taxes, except in proportion of 5 per cent. to each payment. The immediate consequence of this measure, following so closely upon the withdrawal of the small shopkeepers, whose stock of coin consisted almost exclusively of this description. This loss is estimated by Consul Bilio 80 and even 90 per cent. of the national savings.⁽⁵⁾

(1) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 6 (1881), page 197. See a very interesting and patriotic given at Tiflis in 1880, by an Armenian, Dr. Gregory Arzruni, on the famine in Armenia, its causes and effects, published at the time in the Armenian newspaper *Mech* translated into German, under the title of "Die Hungersnoth in Türkisch Armenien. Ein von Dr. Gregor Arzruni, gedruckt erschienen in St. Petersburg, Moskau, &c. The same was also received from Russia, viz.: 70,000 roubles sent by the Armenians in Russia on the economic condition of the Armenians in Turkey. *Ibid.* "Die ökonomische Lage Armenien in der Türkei, öffentlich Vortrag gehalten am 11 März im Tifliser Handwerk in armenischer Sprache, von Dr. Gregor Arzruni übersetzt von A. Amiranjanjan." (St. Petersburg, 1880, page 23.)

(2) Captain Everett. *Academie der Wissenschaften*, 1879, 36 pages.
(3) Captain Clayton. *Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 23 (1880), page 119.
(4) Clayton. *Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 6 (1881), page 40.
(5) Bilio. *Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 23 (1880), pp. 146 and 153. *Ibid.* No. 6 (1881), page 1. Bilio relates the following occurrence, a heartrending example of the despair to which entire class of the population is reduced: "A poor negro, a liberated slave, had contrived

If these proceedings are considered in conjunction with the encouragement given to the disastrous invasion of Circassian immigrants, the singular toleration shown to Kurdish brigandage, is not the conclusion irresistible that there is something more at work than stupidity or administrative greed? Do they not once more suggest the idea of a settled plan to slowly exterminate the Christian element for the sake of the Moslem?

During this time the Turkish Government tries as usual to deceive Europe, by fostering the belief that its officials are zealously undertaking the best means of insuring the welfare of the populations. One example will show the truth of these assertions. The following is an exact transcript of an official note sent to the Porte by the British Ambassador (Sir A. H. Layard) on the 23rd December, 1879:—⁽¹⁾

"Her Majesty's Ambassador had the honour to receive an official communication from the Sublime Porte, on the 16th instant, of a telegram from the Governor-General of the vilayet of Erzeroum, in which it is stated that the *Mutessarif of Bayazid* had arrived at his post on the 21st September last, and that *he had not ceased from that time, in pursuance of his instructions, to occupy himself with the amelioration of the condition of the inhabitants of that district, to watch over the public security, and to punish the guilty.*

"Her Majesty's Ambassador regrets to state that the British Vice-Consul at Erzeroum, in a dispatch dated the 5th instant, writes as follows with regard to the district of Bayazid and its new *Mutessarif*:—

"I have received a very unsatisfactory report from the Bayazid district, where the distress occasioned by dearth of wheat is very great. When my informant left Bayazid, no order had been received by the *Mutessarif to distribute from the Government stores.* People who could so afford have offered as much as 2½ Turkish lira for six *gots*, or the almost unheard-of price of 600 piastres the somar, but without being able to obtain it. There is no wheat sown in the district. In Alashgerd things are not quite so bad, but the destitution is very great; and at Mollah Suleiman thirteen families are literally starving.

"*The new Mutessarif does not appear to be taking any steps to restrain the depredations of the Kurds, or alleviate the distress of the people. In short, the sandjak appears now to be in a worse state than when I visited it in the autumn.*"

years of hardship and privation, to put together £200, which secured for him comfort for the rest of his life. The withdrawal of the *caïmés*, of the copper coin, and lastly the depreciation of the silver currency, having deprived him of his hard-earned savings, he decided to put an end to his life, which had lost all its charms. He repaired to the principal entrance at the Seraglio, armed with a cutlass, and there deliberately cut open his belly. His self-inflicted wound was so ghastly that his intestines dropped on the ground, but he lived long enough to state the motive of his act of despair."

(¹) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 23 (1880), page 15.

"Her Majesty's Ambassador leaves it to the Sublime Porte to reconcile the discrepancy between the report furnished to it by the Governor-General of Erzeroum and that of Captain Everett. He regrets to say, for himself, *that all the accounts he has received from the district of Bayazid unfortunately tend to confirm the statements of the British Vice-Consul.*"

Nobody could be told in more diplomatic terms that his informant is an impudent liar.

About the same time, and at Erzeroum itself, whence the Governor-General telegraphed this false information, things were happening which were still more serious than the mere inaction of the authorities. The wheat in the Government stores was bought up wholesale for speculative purposes by the officials, who held it with the view of profiting by the rise. They thus contributed to increase the misery which it was their business to relieve.⁽¹⁾ But all that was forgiven, provided that luxury continued to reign at Stamboul, and that the *havalés* or orders to pay, issued by the Central Government on the provincial treasuries, were duly honoured. These "*havalés*," which absorbed, and do so yet, the greater part of the Imperial revenues, are issued for the most various purposes, such as payments to bankers or financial companies, of preferential claims on certain kinds of taxes, payments to contractors for supplies to the palace or Government offices, and payment of salaries or grants to high officials of the Central Government.⁽²⁾ The provincial officials are compelled to meet these payments before any other, and the last order issued takes precedence of all the previous ones. One day in 1880, urgent orders were received at Erzeroum to find 15,000 Turkish pounds (337,500 francs), intended to provide for the maintenance of the troops. But when the sum was ready, a fresh order directed the Vali to send it direct to the palace. Simultaneously orders were received by the Treasury at Trebizond to send 10,000 pounds (222,500 francs) to the palace, and 5,000 pounds (111,250 francs) to the chief of the eunuchs.⁽³⁾

As the requirements of the Seraglio and the chief of the eunuchs take precedence of those of the army, the order given in May, 1880, by the Minister of Finance to suspend the payment of salaries to the provincial

(1) Report of Captain Everett, 30th January, 1880. *Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 23 (1880), page 62.

(2) Report of Vice-Consul Gatheral, of Angora. *Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 6 (1881), page 3. According to Mr. Wilson, Consul-General in Anatolia, the system of *havalés* is one of the worst that has ever been adopted. *Blue-Book*, No. 23 (1880), page 75.

(3) Report of Vice-Consul Biliotti, of Trebizond. *Blue-Book*, No. 6 (1881), page 25.

employés until further orders requires no explanation.⁽¹⁾ And nobody will wonder why they, as well as Magistrates of judicial rank and Zaptiehs, when, as sometimes happens, their salaries or pay are several years in arrear, at last resort to theft. This last observation will serve as an introduction to what I have to say concerning the administration of Ottoman justice.

2nd. *Administration of Justice*.—In 1881, Earl Granville, Foreign Secretary, laid before Parliament a collection of Consular reports specially relating to the administration of justice in the civil, criminal, and commercial courts of the Ottoman Empire, and the question as to what extent the evidence of Christians is admitted by the Turkish tribunals. This collection, of 150 pages, forms the *Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 8 (1881). The other Blue-Books contain a quantity of information on the same subject, which I have also consulted, and it is on this evidence the following criticism of the working of the Turkish tribunals in Asia Minor is based.

Turkish tribunals are of two kinds: Those of the *Sheriat*, which decide according to the Sheri or religious law of the Moslems, founded on the unchanging precepts of the Koran, and on quite a number of precedents, traditions, decrees, and decisions (*fetwas*), the basis of which is always the law of the Koran. The composition of these tribunals is purely ecclesiastical. They are specially competent to try questions of marriage and inheritance amongst Mussulmans, as well as some matters relating to real property.

The *Nizamieh tribunals*, which administer the law of Nizam. The latter comprises two great sections, viz.: The “*Medjele*,” or civil law, based on the Koran, and on the additions which have been made by Mussulman jurisprudence, as shown in numerous codifications and commentaries; the “*Destur*,” which includes the *Tanzimat*,⁽²⁾ the *Tashkeelat*, or code compiled according to the code Napoleon and the French codes of civil and commercial procedure, with further numerous additions and modifications. Amongst the latter there is a re-organisation of the tribunals, decreed in 1879, separating the executive from the judicial power.

(1) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 4 (1880), page 181.

(2) The name of *Tanzimat*, which is the plural of the Arab word “*Tanzim*,” signifying order, organisation, is given to the mass of reforms promised in the *Hatti-Sherif of Gulhane* (3rd November, 1839).

The composition of the Nizamieh tribunals is mixed, as well as their jurisdiction. They decide generally in civil matters all disputes between Christians and Mussulmans, or between Christian Turkish subjects, and try criminal and commercial cases.

If this legislation, with all its apparently modern formulas, could be taken literally, it would still doubtless be very much open to criticism. Nevertheless, considered as a whole, the conclusion would be that, as regards at least this order of institutions, Turkey had at last entered the path of reform. Unfortunately, it is not so. Just as the European dress and prepossessing deportment of a Turkish Pasha, in nine cases out of ten, only mask an ignorant and corrupt fanatic, so this legislative structure, with its chaste outlines and honest air, only serves to conceal from the inquisitive eyes of Europe the existence of shameful and odious abuses. It is astonishing that even the principle of the separation of the judicial and executive functions—a principle which, in Western Europe, is rightly considered as the surest protection of the liberty of the subject—has produced in Turkey nothing but bad results. Such is the opinion of all the Consuls, and the reason they give is, that if the independence of the judge is a good thing, it is on condition that the judge be honest. Otherwise, he only uses his independence to practise more unbridled corruption. Before 1879, it happened sometimes that a well-meaning Vali tried to reform the staff and practices of the courts of justice. He can do so no longer. Hence an aggravation of the *régime*, which Mr. Wilson, Consul-General in Anatolia, describes as follows:—

“There has probably never been a time in which the prestige of the Courts has fallen so low, or in which the administration of justice has been so venal and corrupt. The most open and shameless bribery is practised from highest to lowest; prompt, even-handed justice for rich and poor alike is unknown; sentence is given in favour of the suitor who ‘places’ his money most judiciously; imprisonment or freedom has in many places become a matter of bribery; robbers, when arrested, are protected by members of the Court, who share their spoil; a simple order may send an innocent man to prison for months; crime goes unpunished, and all manner of oppression and injustice is committed with impunity. The Cadis, especially those in the cazas, are, as a rule, ignorant men, with no education, knowing little of law, except the Sheri, on which they base their decisions, and sometimes not over-much of that. As to the members, it is sufficient to say that they are nearly all equally ignorant of law, and that probably not 25 per cent. of them can write Turkish, or read the sentences to which they attach their seals. In the Commercial Courts, the Presidents are frequently entirely ignorant of the duties which they have to perform. The low pay of the Cadis, the short term—two years—during which they hold their appointments

and the manner in which they obtain them, render the receipt of bribes almost a necessity. The first thought of a Cadi who buys an appointment in the provinces is to recoup himself for his outlay; the second, to obtain enough money to purchase a new place when his term of office is finished. Even under this system men are to be found who refuse to receive bribes; and there are others who, whilst giving way to temptation, deplore the necessity to do so."⁽¹⁾

Can we not picture the frightful demoralisation which such a *régime* must involve? If corruption prevails amongst the judges, how can it fail to exist amongst the parties interested and the witnesses? If the sources of the law are contaminated, will not those of truth be so likewise? The following is a remarkable case in point. To prove any act, Turkish law requires at least two witnesses. For the purpose of complying with this requirement, *perjury has been organised* in Asia Minor. In every town there exists a café or bathing establishment, where false witnesses can be procured at any time, ready to swear, for a consideration, anything that may be required. These individuals are known all over the town, and consequently to the Court, which, however, does not prevent the latter from listening gravely to their evidence, noting it, and deciding accordingly. Consul-General Wilson, from whose report I take these facts, adds: "From the peculiar value of Moslem evidence, most of the false witnesses are Turks; there is, however, a proportion of Christians."⁽²⁾

This "peculiar value," which really attaches to Moslem evidence, is directly opposed to Turkish law, which makes no distinction, at all events in the Nizamieh Courts, in reference to the religious belief of the witnesses. It is different in the Sheriat Courts, where the evidence of a Christian is not admitted at all. But, as we have already seen, the jurisdiction of these Courts, which are of an ecclesiastical nature, is very limited. In conformity with the principle of the equality of all before the law, the Tanzimat therefore proclaims the legal rule that the evidence of a Christian is as good as that of a Moslem. This rule, moreover, has received international sanction in Clause 63 of the Treaty of Berlin, where we read: "*All (the subjects of the Ottoman Empire) shall be allowed to give evidence before the Courts without distinction of creed.*"

Let us see how this clause is applied in the administration of the law to the Christians of Asia Minor. The English Consuls shall tell us.

(1) Report of Mr. Wilson. *Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 8 (1881), page 57, No. 48.

(2) Same report, page 58, No. 51.

Mr. Biliotti, Consul at Trebizond, writes:—
 "Christian evidence is accepted in the town of Trebizond, but I am assured in the districts that though the same principle is admitted, no Mussulman has ever been condemned on the testimony of Christians; so much so, that the latter are in the habit of having their bonds witnessed only by Mussulmans."⁽¹⁾

Mr. Wilson, Consul-General in Anatolia, writes:—
 "In the greater portion of Anatolia, though Christian evidence may be received, no weight is attached to it. When Moslem and Christian evidence are opposed to each other, the latter is disregarded. For instance, three Christians are travelling along a road, and one of them is robbed by a man well known to all of them; in the action which ensues, the robber has only to prove an *atibi* by two Moslem false witnesses to gain his case."⁽²⁾

Mr. Chermiside, Vice-Consul at Sivas, writes:—
 "As regards the acceptance of Christian testimony, theoretically it is accepted in all Nizam Courts. Hearing testimony, however, and attaching the relative importance to it that from its tenor and consistency it is entitled to, are very different matters; and there is no doubt that, especially in civil cases, tradition, sympathy, and education prejudice the Hakim⁽³⁾ against it—sentimental considerations, however, that are not proof against the love of gain."⁽⁴⁾

According to the latter part of this quotation, the spirit which animates the Courts of Asia Minor may be defined as fanaticism tempered by corruption. Such is also the opinion of Mr. Everett, Vice-Consul at Erzeroum, except that he assigns the first place to corruption. Although rather long, the extract appears to me too interesting to warrant its omission here:—

"The evidence of Christians is admitted in all the other Courts (except those of the Sheri) as fully as the evidence of Mahomedans, but such admittance does not ensure them equal justice. The first consideration of the administrators of justice is the amount of money that can be extorted from an individual, and the second is his creed; for it is an established principle—which, in fact, guides the conduct of a Court throughout a suit—that a favourable decision shall be given to him who will pay the most for it, some abatement being allowed under certain circumstances to a Mahomedan then engaged in a suit with a Christian. Thus, in a lawsuit between wealthy Mahomedans, success will lie with him who can afford and is willing to pay the most; but if the suit is between a Mahomedan and a Christian whose means are the same, the Christian will have to pay high for the difference of religion in order

⁽¹⁾ *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 8 (1881), page 47.
⁽²⁾ Same *Blue-Book*, page 58, No. 52.
⁽³⁾ The Hakim, who is a member of the religious body of Ulema, presides over the lower courts (Bidayet), which is to be found in every caza (hundred), and also over the Sandjak or district court.
⁽⁴⁾ *Blue-Book*, *ibid*, pp. 71, 72.

to ensure success, and if he should be in the position of prosecutor, will hardly succeed, even though he should outbid his antagonist, the Court being in such a case willing to forego a larger sum rather than convict one of their own creed. Where a rich Christian is pitted against a poor Mahomedan, the latter will have no chance. The case of the poor Christian against the wealthy Moslem needs no demonstration; with everything against him, success is impossible.

"In addition to bribery, which affects all classes and creeds, and which is practised to-day more frequently than at any time heretofore, there are three circumstances due to the present relations between the Christian and the Mahomedan which tend to place the former at a disadvantage on entering a court of justice with a case against a Mussulman. These are:—

1. "Enmity between the Christian and the Mussulman—an enmity greatly increased of late by reason of the pressure which foreign Powers are placing on the Mahomedan in order to procure reforms for the Christian.

2. "The acknowledgment of the necessity for reforms, which would be implied by the conviction of a Notable or Bey in a case with a Christian.

3. "The fear which the Christian has of his oppressor, causing a prosecutor great difficulty in obtaining witnesses to support his case."⁽¹⁾

I shall have occasion subsequently to revert to the first of the particular causes of enmity against the Christians to which Mr. Everett alludes, and to show the grave responsibility which it throws upon the Great Powers. For the present let us merely bear in mind that the only doubt as regards the morality of the Turkish magistrates in Asia Minor appears to be whether they are more corrupt than fanatical, or more fanatical than corrupt. The answer varies according to the individual. We know, moreover, that in every country, in every religion, and under all Governments, fanaticism and corruption go hand in hand.

The task of purging the Turkish magistracy belongs by right to the Department of the Minister of Justice. Unfortunately, according to Consul-General Wilson,⁽²⁾ this department is reputed to be "the most corrupt, and in every way the worst, in Turkey."

3rd. *Police and Gendarmerie*.—After what has been said, any further observations with regard to the manner in which, according to the Consular reports, the officials specially entrusted with the maintenance of public security discharge their duties in Armenia might almost be dispensed with. Even at Constantinople, where the best-attested facts are denied, nobody dare dispute the assertion that, as regards the police and gendarmerie, nothing has yet been done. They confine themselves to promising a reform—ever expected, but never realised. Moreover, if

(1) *Blue-Book, ibid*, pp. 109, 110.

(2) *Ibid*, page 64, No. 108.

there is neither honesty nor incorruptibility amongst those who collect the taxes or administer justice, how can we expect to find such qualities amongst the guardians of order? How is it possible to prevent the Gendarmes and Zaptiehs, who are kept waiting months and years for their pay, from fleecing those whom they should protect? Badly armed and equipped, and ridiculously few, they are only feared by the peaceable and inoffensive part of the population. It is true there were in 1879, in consequence of Consular pressure, and thanks to the goodwill of certain Commissioners (promptly dismissed), a few attempts, more or less successful and temporary, to create an effective police force in a small number of towns; but the mass, the Consuls write unanimously, remains as undisciplined, insufficient, and corrupt as ever.⁽¹⁾ The great want is good officers, who should be Europeans, or placed under European command. On one occasion the Porte appeared inclined to take the same view. The Turkish Ambassador at London forwarded Lord Salisbury a dispatch from the Foreign Minister of the Sublime Porte, announcing the appointment of two English officers, engaged under contract, as Inspectors-General of the Gendarmerie of the vilayets of Bitlis and Erzeroum.⁽²⁾ But it was all a farce, as in so many other cases; for if we turn to the page of the Blue-Book where this first dispatch is given, we find another sent by the British Ambassador to Lord Salisbury, as follows:—

“Colonel Coope has received orders to proceed to Erzeroum, and Colonel Norton to Bitlis, ‘to inspect the gendarmerie’ in those vilayets. In the instructions given to the former, which I have seen, he is called ‘Mr. Coope,’ no rank in the Turkish army being accorded to him. He has asked for travelling expenses in the discharge of his duties, to which he says he is entitled by his contract; but Osman Pasha, to whom he went for instructions, refused to authorise their payment, and was not disposed to treat him with much civility. *I fear that there is no serious intention on the part of the Minister of War to avail himself of the services of these officers, and that they are merely sent on their present missions in order to enable the Porte to say that they are employed.*”⁽³⁾

Thus, several months afterwards, Lieutenant Chermiside writes with reference to the Gendarmerie and Zaptiehs, that “the old system, with all its abuses, obtains. Badly equipped, and often badly armed Zaptiehs,

(¹) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 4 (1880), pp. 70 (Cooper), 171 (Gatheral); No. 23 (1880), pp. 104 (Clayton), 189 (Chermiside); No. 6 (1881), page 25 (Biliotti), &c., &c.

(²) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 23 (1880), page 26.

(³) *Ibid*, page 28. Dispatch of 28th January, 1880.

numerically few; in arrears of pay." In short, "all that has been hitherto done is a hollow farce."⁽¹⁾

By way of conclusion, let me give the picture which is drawn of the insecurity of the vilayet of Erzeroum, by Vice-Consul Everett, in the report from which I have already quoted an extract:—

"In addition to the great poverty of the Kurdish tribes, caused by the loss of their cattle last winter, and the depreciation of the metallic currency, there are three circumstances tending to encourage brigandage, which exists at this moment to an unparalleled extent all over the country. Firstly, there are not sufficient police; secondly, there are no good officers; and thirdly, there is collusion between the local authorities and the robbers. As regards the first cause, it is almost needless to remark that, if any increase is contemplated, money must be forthcoming to pay the men well and regularly. If the officers of the Gendarmerie sit quietly in their houses, never leading an expedition or assisting personally in the capture of a brigand, it can hardly be expected that the men will work well. Yet this is precisely the case. Everything is left to the subordinate officers, who, being most irregularly paid, are always ready to accept a bribe; and being, moreover, unsupported by their superiors, are often afraid to capture offenders. The third cause influences them also. It is not likely that a man will risk his life to capture a robber, who will be released from prison two or three weeks after he is taken. This is no uncommon occurrence, for the local Kaimakam is either a sleeping partner in the business, or lets his prisoner escape for a consideration.

"This is the existing state of things . . . so far as this vilayet is concerned. But to fully comprehend the distressing condition of the people, such a description will not suffice. . . . Nothing short of being brought in direct contact with the officials, as we are, can convince you of their apathy and laziness, of their corruptness, of their utter want of consideration for the welfare of the people, and, finally, that measures are useless unless men can be found who will loyally execute them."⁽²⁾

Let us remember this declaration, unfortunately too true elsewhere besides Armenia. "Not measures, but men," is the cry of all those who have seen in practice, as applied by the Ottoman Administration, the pseudo-reforms so often announced in Turkey. This is one of the points to which I shall have to direct attention when I inquire what this great Liberal and Christian Europe can and ought to do for those countries to which she has promised, and to whom she owes, at the very least, tolerable government.

4th. *Working of the Central and Local Administrations.*—The great drawback of Turkish Administrations, both central and local, lies in the fact that the motive of the continual changes which they have

⁽¹⁾ *Blue-Book.* Turkey, No. 6 (1881), page 91.

⁽²⁾ *Blue-Book.* Turkey, No. 6 (1881), page 186.

undergone for some thirty years has generally been, not a desire to do well, but a hypocritical desire to continue to do evil, whilst trying to make Europe believe the contrary. In this way there has arisen an unprecedented state of things, in which we find a monstrous agglomeration of evils and vices of the most varied character: extreme arbitrariness and extreme weakness, prodigality and avarice, reckless luxury and abject misery, excessive pride and extreme meanness; in a word, the worst products of civilisation and barbarism. What can be expected in the shape of reform from the mischievous creatures who swarm in the Government offices at Constantinople, and whose first care should be to abolish themselves? All their efforts are employed, all their ability consists in gaining time, in throwing dust into the eyes of the Ambassadors and Consuls, and in shielding one another from the discovery and chastisement of their misdeeds. In this respect they are past-masters. Even when claims are presented by the Ambassadors of the Great Powers on behalf of their countrymen, there is nothing so difficult as to get a settlement. In 1879, Sir A. H. Layard wrote to Lord Salisbury that the most unimportant question had to be laid before the Cabinet, which, according to the Foreign Minister, Saïd Pasha, had 3,600 questions before it awaiting discussion and settlement. In most cases, all is not terminated when the Cabinet has decided. The papers must be sent to the palace, there to await the Sultan's examination and "Irâdé." Another difficulty arises from the confusion and disorder which prevail at the Porte. In all the departments the pay of the employés is in arrear, some of whom are literally on the verge of starvation. The consequence is they neglect their work, and are undisciplined. Documents are constantly being lost, and the people concerned are compelled to get fresh ones, which is not always possible.⁽¹⁾

The manner in which the Palace or the Central Administration shields the dishonesty, or breaches of trust, of certain officials is often quite a scandal. To prove their guilt avails nothing. If they are in favour, instead of punishment and disgrace, fresh dignities await them. If the fact is too patent, the lower officials are punished, instead of the culprits in high places. The Blue-Books give a lot of instances. I will only select two at random.

(¹) Dispatch from Sir A. H. Layard, 26th December, 1879. *Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 4 (1880), page 189.

A military commander had been accused of dishonesty in the management of the funds with which he was entrusted. The inquiry proves that he has committed considerable frauds, but for good reasons the Commissioner entrusted with the investigation hesitates for a time as to what course to adopt. However, happening to be an honest man, he exposed the facts in their nakedness, and, in consequence of subsequent orders from Constantinople, placed under arrest the subordinate officers, who were compromised in the frauds perpetrated by their superior. But whilst these subordinates were sent under arrest to the capital, one of the Sultan's yachts entered the port of Trebizond, and took on board the commander in question, who was appointed to a high position in the palace itself.⁽¹⁾

One of the most odious officials of the Porte in 1879 was the Vali or Governor of Aleppo, Kiamil Pasha. In consequence of the revolting cruelties and extortions which had been practised, mainly towards the Armenian Christians at Zeitoun, the Porte, urged by the British Ambassador and Consul, had consented, with very bad grace, to open an inquiry into the alleged facts. The result of the inquiry was overwhelming. To punish the Zeitounites for some disturbances which had taken place when taxes were being levied which they considered new and unjust, Kiamil Pasha had taken as hostages from the mountain at Aleppo nineteen women, one of whom died on the way, and he had thrown into prison 150 Christians at Marash, and forty-five at Aleppo, against the greater part of whom he could not even bring a definite charge. The British Consul himself saw at Zeitoun fourteen Christians in chains, standing with their necks, hands, and feet in iron rings, fastened to the wall, so as to prevent them from moving.

This same Kiamil Pasha had been, moreover, accused of receiving bribes, and of having forged, or helped to forge, letters intended to libel the Consul who had denounced him.⁽²⁾ At last the Porte was obliged to give a definite undertaking that it would dismiss him, and, as a matter of fact, in the month of April, 1879, he resigned his post, to the great joy of those under his authority.⁽³⁾ Nevertheless, in the month of November of the same year an indignant dispatch from the Ambassador, Sir A. H. Layard, informed Lord Salisbury that this very Kiamil Pasha

(1) Report from Consul Biliotti, 9th July, 1880. *Blue-Book*, No. 6 (1881), page 25.

(2) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 1 (1880), pp. 2, 4, 5, 9-11, 20, 26, 28, 127, and *passim*.

(3) *Ibid*, page 60.



had just been appointed "Musteshar," that is, Under-Secretary in the Ministry of the Interior, and President of the Commission for the Appointment of Public Officials.⁽¹⁾ That is not all. In the month of May, 1880, a fresh dispatch from the same Ambassador states that this same Kiamil Pasha has just been appointed by the Sultan Minister of the Evkaf, or Pious Foundations, and decorated with the Order of the Medjidié of the second class.⁽²⁾

After that, can anyone be astonished that Turkish Armenia, which is naturally one of the richest countries in the world, should be now, owing to the manner in which it is governed, one of the poorest and most wretched? An independent Mussulman writes from Boulandjik to Consul Biliotti that "it is impossible to give an idea of the state of things." Tyrannised over, robbed and driven from their lands by Government officials and Agas, Mussulmans as well as Christians "shed tears of blood."⁽³⁾ The aspect of the country is desolate. No care is taken to preserve or re-stock the forests. The villages are only collections of mud huts, in plains devoid of trees, water, gardens, or vegetables. The inhabitants are coarsely fed and coarsely clad. Neither roads nor bridges are in a

(¹) Dispatch from Sir A. H. Layard, 9th November, 1879. *Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 1 (1880), page 127. The matter in question is of such a serious nature that I consider it incumbent on me to quote the exact words of the British Ambassador's dispatch:—

"Therapia, 9th November, 1879.

"My Lord,—I regret to have to state to your lordship that Kiamil Pasha, who was removed from his post of Vali of Aleppo on account of my representations against his conduct in the Zeitoun affair, has been named 'Musteshar' or Under-Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior (a place, I believe, created for him), and President of the Commission for the appointment of Public Functionaries.

"I learn, upon good authority, that this appointment has been forced upon Mahmoud Nedim Pasha, notwithstanding his strong objection to it. It is scarcely credible that a man who has been recently proved guilty of treating the Christians of Zeitoun with great cruelty, and who is under the accusation of having received bribes, and of having forged, or connived at the forgery of, letters in order to misrepresent the conduct of one of Her Majesty's Consuls, should be named to a place of so much importance, which ought to be filled by a man of known integrity and of liberal views.—I have, &c.,

(Signed) "A. H. LAYARD.

"I must add that, in spite of the names being identical, it has not been proved to me that this Kiamil Pasha is the same person as the present Grand Vizir."

(²) Dispatch from Sir A. H. Layard of 24th May, 1880. *Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 23 (1880), page 193. *Ibid*, No. 6 (1881), page 173: a dispatch from Vice-Consul Clayton states that one individual, who had been dismissed by the Reform Commissioners from his position as judge of the Criminal Court of Bashkala, has just been re-appointed to the same post, in pursuance of special orders sent from Constantinople.

(³) *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 23 (1880), pp. 193, 194.

serviceable state. The remains of old roads and the ruins of ancient bridges and public buildings in themselves attest at once the former prosperity of the country and the depth of its present decay. There hardly remains a single public building whose interior or exterior is not partially in ruins. The proportion of the nomad population to the settled population is constantly increasing. Even the use of certain modern inventions, such as steam navigation and the telegraph, benefits the Government almost alone, by providing it with enormous facilities for stifling every inclination to resist its oppressive measures.⁽¹⁾

The proof that this state of things is exclusively owing to the misgovernment of the country, lies in the fact that that part of Armenia which was annexed to Russia in 1878 has presented since 1880 a striking contrast to the part which remained Turkish territory. On this subject we possess the unimpeachable evidence of the English Vice-Consul who accompanied the Commissioners entrusted with the delimitation of the frontier. He compares the condition of two villages one hour and a half's distance from each other. At Kara-Kilissa, which remained under Turkish rule, the people complained bitterly of the oppression of the soldiers, who took everything from them without payment; whilst Bashkeui, which was ceded to Russia, was in a flourishing condition, and the Cossack detachment which occupied it got on admirably with the people. At Sary-Kamish, another frontier village on Russian territory, very great improvements were visible everywhere. Barracks for the regiment quartered there were in course of construction, and several shops were being built. In the country round, Circassian brigandage still existed; but the Cossacks were making praiseworthy efforts to put it down, and the English Consul has no doubt they will succeed.⁽²⁾

Such also would have been the situation of the whole of Turkish Armenia if the Turkish Government had kept its international engagements. What have the Great Powers done to compel it to do so? It would certainly be unjust to accuse them of indifference to the terrible sufferings of which I have only sketched the principal features, and which are attested, during the period from 1878 to 1881, by several volumes of

(1) See account of a journey through Kurdistan, sent by Lieutenant Chermiside to the Ambassador, Sir A. H. Layard, and by the latter to Earl Granville. *Blue-Book*, No. 23 (1880), pp. 183-190, and particularly page 189.

(2) Report of Vice-Consul Everett to Major Trotter, 7th September, 1880. *Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 6 (1881), page 174.

Consular reports. I have already had occasion to quote several very strong notes from the British Ambassador, but I could not, without greatly extending the limits of this work, quote them all. They show a constant anxiety on the part of Lord Salisbury, as well as Earl Granville, to awaken the conscience of Turkish Ministers, and to make them understand, if not the extent of their moral responsibility, at all events the considerable danger to which their perversity or their inertia was exposing the Empire. In November, 1879, the English Government went the length of ordering an English squadron to the Archipelago for the purpose of a naval demonstration. The Turkish Government was greatly excited at this proceeding, and, with a view to getting the order countermanded, made the fairest promises,⁽¹⁾ pompously announced the dispatch of Baker Pasha on a mission of reform, the appointment of Europeans as Judicial Inspectors, officers in the Gendarmerie, &c.—all, of course, without any result. But England was not the only Power that was roused. On June 11th, an Identical Note of the Great Powers demanded the execution of different clauses of the Treaty of Berlin, which had hitherto remained in suspense. Amongst these clauses appeared, firstly, the rectification of the Turco-Greek frontier; and, secondly, the settlement of the Montenegrin frontier. After calling attention to these points, the Identical Note proceeds as follows:—

“The attention of the Powers has finally been drawn to a third point.

“By the 61st Article of the Treaty of Berlin of the 13th July, 1878, the Sublime Porte undertook to carry out without further delay the improvements and administrative reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security against the attacks and the violence of the Circassians and Kurds, and periodically to make known the steps taken to this effect to the Powers who are to superintend their application.

“So far as the Government of — are aware, nothing has been done by the Sublime Porte to make known the measures which it may have taken in order to meet the stipulations of Article 61 of the Treaty of Berlin; nor have any measures been adopted by the Porte for the superintendence to be exercised by the Powers.

“All the reports furnished by the Agents of the Powers show that the state of these provinces is deplorable, and the Government of — cannot admit that the clauses of the Treaty of Berlin relating to the amelioration of this state of things should remain any longer a dead letter. They are convinced that only united and

(1) See dispatch from Lord Salisbury to Sir A. H. Layard, giving an account of an interview of the English Minister with the Turkish Ambassador. (*Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 4, 1880, page 121.)

incessant pressure on their part will induce the Sublime Porte to fulfil its duties in this respect. The Government of —, therefore, as one of the Signatory Powers of the Treaty of Berlin, must demand the complete and immediate execution of Article 61 of that Treaty, and call upon the Government of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan to state explicitly what the steps are which they have taken in order to fulfil the provisions of this Article.

“In bringing these views to the knowledge of your Excellency, I consider it my duty to call your most serious attention to the grave responsibility the Porte would incur by any fresh delay in the execution of the measures which the Powers agree in considering to be essential to the interests of the Ottoman Empire and of Europe.”⁽¹⁾

An interesting detail, which is revealed in the dispatch in which Mr. Goschen, the British Ambassador, sends the text of the Identical Note to Lord Granville, is that the conclusion of the latter was drawn up by the French Ambassador, Mr. Tissot, and that all the Ambassadors were unanimous in adopting it. All, therefore, were agreed on these important declarations, viz.: *that the interest of Europe, as well as that of the Ottoman Empire, requires the execution of the 61st Article of the Treaty of Berlin, and that the joint and incessant action of the Powers can alone bring about this result.*

On the 5th of July, the Turkish Foreign Minister, Abeddin Pasha, sent the following Note in reply to the representatives of the Powers:—

“Monsieur l’Ambassadeur,—I have the honour to reply to that portion of the Note of 11th June which refers to the stipulations of Article 61 of the Berlin Treaty, which stipulations are stated in the last paragraph of the same clause.

“In spite of the anxieties and difficulties of every description which resulted from the war, the execution of these clauses has always been present in the mind of the Ottoman Government, which has sent to all parts of Kurdistan and other vilayets several competent officials, for the purpose of studying the most efficient means of ensuring the security both of the Armenians and the other faithful subjects of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, and, finally, to show the method of applying these means by executing themselves some measures coming within their jurisdiction. Besides these Commissions, it is well known that in a short space of time the Ottoman Government has decreed the separation of the Nizamieh tribunals from the executive power, in conformity with the European system; that it is still endeavouring to give them an improved organisation, and to make the necessary experiments for the creation of a new system of collecting taxes and tithes, in order to ensure the peace and tranquillity of the populations; and, finally, that it has begun to establish Gendarmerie and Police in certain localities, entrusting several special native and foreign officers with the duty of submitting plans for these two institutions, and considering everything which might contribute to their success.

(1) *Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 9 (1880).

"It appears from these inquiries, that amongst the reforms best adapted to the character and necessities of the populations, those now admitted to be the most urgent and efficient are the organisation and distribution of the Nahiés (parishes) and the creation of Courts of Assize.

"I therefore deem it expedient to go into a few particulars relating to these two points, which are destined to thoroughly ensure public order and security.

"Each district (caza) will be divided into parishes or communes, comprising groups of villages bordering on each other. The communal councillors will be elected by the inhabitants, and the Government will appoint one of the councillors Administrator of the commune, invested with certain powers connected with the Executive; these Administrators will be under the orders of the Sub-Prefects (Kaimakams), and will also exercise municipal functions. They must profess the same religious creed as the majority of the inhabitants by whom they are elected, and in that case will have assistants who profess the creed of the minority. They will be assisted in the discharge of their functions by a mixed council, consisting of from four to six members, elected by the suffrages of the population. The above-mentioned communal administrators and councils will be elected for the first time only by the administrative councils of the sub-prefectures, which councils will have to select them from the inhabitants of the respective localities.

"Each Administrator will have under his orders a body of Gendarmerie, the number of which may be increased in proportion to the real requirements of the locality. This armed force will be entrusted with the duty of maintaining order and security in the commune, arresting bad characters and vagrants, and protecting the inhabitants from all violence and annoyance. Each brigade of Gendarmes will be entitled to summon the help and co-operation of those of other communes, so as to act together and engage in the pursuit of brigands.

"Besides the above-mentioned policemen, there will be formed in each province, in accordance with a special regulation, a corps of provincial Gendarmerie, the officers and soldiers of which will be selected from all classes of the subjects of the Empire, and which will be placed under the orders of the Governor-General (Vali), to be placed at the disposal of the Prefects (Mutessarifs) and Sub-Prefects (Kaimakams). It will be commanded by experienced officers, and will give aid and assistance, whenever required, to the Gendarmes in the communes.

"It would be impossible within the limits of the present Note to enumerate all the advantages which will be derived from the foregoing organisation. It must suffice for me to say that it will at once be an efficient means of increasing the number of communal schools, promoting the progress of agriculture, and improving the means of communication by the medium of the communal administrators and councils. A similar experiment in one of the districts of the vilayet of Salonica produced the best results, to the great satisfaction of the local population. The principal effect of such a measure will therefore be to establish public and individual security on a firm basis.

"Another powerful means of ensuring this security is, as we have said, the institution of Assize Courts. These tribunals will be held successively in each

district where their presence is required, to try criminal causes. This mode of procedure presents considerable advantages, as inquiry and judgment can be conducted with greater facility on the spot than if the case were brought before the stationary criminal courts in the sandjaks; for it always happens that persons whose evidence is indispensable refuse to appear before the latter, and even to come forward as witnesses, on account of the long distances, difficulties of communication, loss of time, and considerable expense—all of them things which necessarily obstruct the course of justice.

"The Ottoman Government has already admitted to public employment capable and honest persons, without distinction of creed. Henceforth this principle will be still more widely applied, and the Ottoman Government will take care that it is carried into practice.

"Another matter quite as important is occupying the attention of the Imperial Government, viz.: that of watching attentively the progress of education and public works—the principal cause of a country's happiness. Consequently, setting aside the revenue from the customs, the salt and tobacco taxes in each vilayet, as well as those from the Pious Foundations (*Evkaf*), the administration of which is entrusted to the communal councils, one-tenth of the remainder of the expenditure devoted to the administrative service of the same vilayet—expenditure which is provided for by the other general revenues of the same vilayet—shall be reserved, and, from the commencement of next year, be placed at the disposal of the vilayet for the purposes of education and public works. It is needless to say that this special allowance will be augmented as the State revenues increase.

"A number of regulations concerning the vilayets—regulations which are based upon experience and inquiries made upon the spot—are under consideration. They will shortly be put into force throughout all the provinces of Asiatic Turkey. The powers of the Governors-General will also be extended, and their positions secured.

"Such are, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, the chief features of the special regulations which are going to be put into force.

"In bringing the foregoing to your notice, I regret to have to state that whenever misdemeanours—which naturally occur in every country in the world—happen to be committed in Armenia, some over-zealous people appear to take it upon themselves to invent imaginary crimes in addition to the real offences, and to represent them before the eyes of Europe and the Consuls on the spot as having actually occurred.

"In conclusion, I think it my duty to state plainly and accurately to your Excellency the following result of the official census taken of the Armenian populations of Van, Diarbekir, Bitlis, Erzeroum, and Sivas: the proportion of Armenians is 17 per cent., of other non-Mussulman communities 4 per cent., and of Mussulman inhabitants 79 per cent. of the population.

"I consider it needless to state that the Sublime Porte will advise the other Signatory Powers of the Berlin Treaty of the steps it has taken for the gradual introduction of reforms in the provinces of Kurdistan and Anatolia, inhabited also by Armenians."

I have thought it advisable to give this document in its entirety, in spite of its length and small real value, because it appears to me to combine in a remarkable degree the distinguishing characteristics of modern Ottoman diplomacy—namely, great facility in assimilating the administrative and constitutional jargon of civilised countries; consummate cunning in taking advantage of this aptitude to conceal, under deceptive appearances, the barbarous reality of deeds and intentions; cool audacity in making promises which there is neither the power nor the desire to make good (as, for instance, the application for educational purposes and public works of *revenues already pledged*;⁽¹⁾); and, finally, a paternal and oily tone, intended to create the impression that the Turkish Government is the victim of unjust prejudices and odious calumnies. The sentence respecting the imaginary crimes invented by the Armenians is a perfect model of this kind.

As soon as the reply of the Porte was received, Earl Granville sent copies to the British Consuls in Anatolia, inviting observations thereon. Eight detailed replies to this request⁽²⁾ are published in the Blue-Book, Turkey, No. 6 (1881). They concur in a crushing condemnation of the Ottoman Government. Their conclusions may be summed up as follows:—

The reforms which the Porte asserts have been commenced are fallacious.

The Commissions have done nothing.

The separation of the Nizamieh tribunals from the executive power has only resulted in evil.

There is nothing real in the asserted improvement in the system of collecting tithes and taxes, nor in the organisation of the Gendarmerie. Baker Pasha has inspected a Gendarmerie which had no existence.

(¹) These revenues, in so far as they formed a part of what are called the six indirect taxes, had been expressly assigned in the preceding November, in pursuance of an agreement between the Turkish Government on one side and the Ottoman and other banks on the other, to a syndicate of bankers, and were handed for this purpose to a special body. The latter did not fail to protest against the misappropriation announced in the Note, and confirmed by a Circular of the Minister of Finance. But the Minister hastened to reply that *the protest was unnecessary, as it was doubtful whether effect would be given to the arrangement*. Thus, at the very time the promise was made to Europe, an evasion was already in contemplation! See Mr. Goschen's dispatch to Earl Granville. (*Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 6, 1881, page 75.)

(²) See *Blue-Book*, No. 6 (1881), pp. 80 (report of Consul-General Wilson), 87 and 181 (Bennett), 91 (Chermide), 107 (Trotter), 112 (Stewart), 156 (Clayton), 185 (Everett), 221 (Billotti).

As regards the so-called "imaginary" crimes, although it is true that Consuls, particularly in the East, have a difficulty in distinguishing truth from falsehood, it is their duty only to report matters considered by them as proven, and that is what they do.

The reforms so pompously announced in the Porte's Note would not have any real effect, admitting they were realised, unless there is a real reform at the centre in Constantinople.⁽¹⁾

A number of indispensable reforms do not seem to be even contemplated by the Porte.

These conclusions, moderately expressed in diplomatic terms, are reflected in the *Collective Note*, dated 7th September, and sent on the 11th September, 1880, to the Sublime Porte, by the Ambassadors of the Great Powers. The following is the exact English text:—

"The Undersigned have received the note dated the 5th July last, by which the Sublime Porte replied to the paragraph contained in the communication of the 11th June last respecting the improvements and administrative reforms which the Ottoman Government engaged themselves, under Article 61 of the Treaty of Berlin, to introduce into the provinces inhabited by the Armenians. A careful study of this document has proved to them that the proposals made by the Ottoman Government do not meet either the spirit or the letter of this Article. The Powers represented by the undersigned are not unaware that the Ottoman Government have sent two Commissions into the provinces inhabited by the Armenians; but they have reason to think that these Commissions have arrived at no result; nor has the Sublime Porte communicated them to the Powers, as stipulated in Article 61 of the Berlin Treaty.

"There is no evidence to prove that any amelioration has been effected in the administration of justice. On the contrary, numerous Consular Reports show that the present situation, as regards the independence of the civil or criminal tribunals, is as bad, if not worse, than it has ever been.

"As regards the Gendarmerie and the police, the note of the 5th July states that the Porte has charged several special officers to present projects of reform for both these services. The Powers have no knowledge of these projects, nor does the Sublime Porte allege that they have been presented to it.

"The Undersigned cannot admit that the reply of your Excellency disposes in any way of the complaints made by them in their note of the 11th June. They consider themselves to be all the more justified in reducing to their true value the efforts made in this direction by the Ottoman Government, inasmuch as the Porte, to judge by its reply, hardly realises its position and its obligations under the Treaty of Berlin.

(1) Dispatch from the Ambassador, Mr. Goschen, to Earl Granville, 30th August, 1880: "All the Consular agents of Her Majesty in Asia Minor repeat over and over again that nothing can be hoped for the provinces unless there is a real reform at the centre in Constantinople . . ."

"Even the language which the Sublime Porte uses in speaking of the crimes committed, or alleged to have been committed, in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, shows that it refuses to recognise the degree of anarchy which exists in those provinces, or the gravity of a state of things which, if permitted to continue, would, in all probability, lead to the destruction of the Christian population of vast districts.

"In the note of the 5th July no serious proposal is made for putting a stop to the excesses of the Circassians and Kurds. Their excesses, it is to be feared, cannot be checked by the simple action of the ordinary laws. Exceptionally rigorous measures can alone put an end to outrages which, in several parts of the provinces mentioned in Article 61, are a continual source of danger to the property, honour, and life of the Armenians.

"Under Article 61 of the Treaty of Berlin, the Porte engaged itself 'to carry into effect without delay the improvements and reforms required by local wants in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians.' The Undersigned regret to observe that in the general project of reform specified in the note of the 5th July none of the 'local wants' spoken of in Article 61 are taken into account.

"The Powers will, doubtless, see with pleasure the introduction of large reforms into all parts of the Turkish Empire; but they are specially concerned to see that full effect is given to the engagements of the Treaty of Berlin, and they cannot admit that the Porte should consider that the engagements it undertook under this head have been fulfilled by proposing a system of re-organisation in which no mention is made of the special reforms that were stipulated for in favour of the provinces named in the Treaty.

"The peculiar characteristic of these provinces is the predominance of the Christian population over large areas of the territory in question; if this predominance is not taken into account no real reform would be effected.

"The Undersigned consider that it is necessary to take another peculiarity of these provinces into consideration. The Porte appears to wish to apply the same Règlement both to the Armenians and to the Kurds. It is indispensable, however, to distinguish between them in administration as far as it is practicable, in view of the absolute impossibility to govern a settled population and semi-nomadic tribes in the same manner. The communes and administrative groups should consequently be so divided as to unite as many homogenous elements as possible, the Armenians, or, when necessary, the Armenians and the Osmanlis being grouped together, to the exclusion of the Kurds. The nomadic Kurdish element, that lives in the mountains and descends into the plains inhabited by Christians only in order to create disturbances, should not be included in the census by which the majority of the inhabitants of each village will be determined.

"It may be assumed that the Sublime Porte sees in the constitution of communes as proposed in the note of the 5th July the means of creating administrative units in which the great majority of the inhabitants will belong to the same religion. There is nothing, however, in this document to show that the Porte engages itself to follow this principle.

"The Undersigned notice with satisfaction that in the proposed organisation the Mayor of each commune is to belong to the religion of the majority; but the absence of a similar provision in the case of the higher functionaries proves conclusively that the 'local wants' of the provinces mentioned in Article 61 have not been sufficiently taken into account in the proposed reforms.

"The Ottoman Government declares 'that honest and capable persons have already been admitted to public offices without distinction of creed, and that henceforward this principle will receive a still wider application.' This declaration is extremely vague, and the Undersigned think that it is the more necessary to lay stress on this point, as the Armenians contend that in the provinces where they exist in very large numbers there is scarcely a single Armenian functionary. Their complaints on this point seem to be well founded, as it might be possible for the Sublime Porte to appoint Christian Governors-General, without giving additional security that the Armenians would meet with greater justice or equity of treatment.

"Measures of a much broader character than those proposed in the note of the Ottoman Government are necessary for the Porte to carry out the engagements made at Berlin.

"The general inadequacy of the proposed reforms is such that it seems useless to comment on the defects of the project presented by the Porte, but the following observations offer themselves:—

"By declaring, in the first place, that the Administrators of communes are to be Government functionaries, nominated by the central authority from among the elected members of the Communal Council, instead of being elected by the Communal Council itself, the Sublime Porte retains the principle of centralisation even in the smallest administrative unit.

"Moreover, the Sublime Porte omits to state, as regards Administrators and members of the Communal Councils, whether they will have a permanent or temporary tenure. Nor is it stated, either, with whom, in case of their unfitness, rests the right of dismissing them. Will this right belong to the Prefectoral Council who appoints them, or to some other authority?

"Again, as regards the Gendarmerie of the commune, it does not appear to be distinguished from the provincial Gendarmerie, either in its recruitment or in any other respect, except that it is under the orders of the commune, and not of the provincial commune. It is not recruited locally among the inhabitants belonging to the majority in creed, and no guarantees are given that it will be what it ought specially to be—namely, a local defensive force.

"Nor does the organisation of the provincial Gendarmerie meet the local wants of the provinces specially mentioned in Article 61, the clause according to which both officers and men are to be recruited 'from all classes of the Sultan's subjects' being of the vaguest character. Both the officers and men of the Gendarmerie of the province should be recruited from the Gendarmerie of the commune, that is to say, from among the rural constabulary chosen by the communes themselves. The rural constabulary, whose duty it would be to defend the villages against Kurdish incursions, would furnish to the Gendarmerie of the province a contingent in

proportion to the population of each commune. The principle of election would, if substituted for the arbitrary provincial administration, in itself constitute a strong guarantee for the effective organisation of the forces intended to ensure public safety.

"The value of the provisions as regards the creation of a Court of Assize will, in the first place, depend on its constitution, with regard to which the note of the 5th July is silent. Looking to the predominance of the Armenian element in certain provinces, special provision appears to be necessary in order to give to that element a proportionate share in the new judicial organisation.

"Here again certain questions present themselves, to the solution of which the Ottoman note gives no clue. Are the judges to be irremovable, or to be nominated for a fixed term? Which code of laws are they to execute? Will it be the Cheri, or some other code? How are the Courts of Assize to make the Kurds, who are semi-independent or quite wild, obey their verdicts? This last question proves conclusively how necessary it is to exclude the Kurds from the reforms intended for the population of Armenia, and to give them a separate administration suitable to their warlike and primitive habits. In treating this question of the relations between the sedentary and nomadic populations, the Undersigned must express their conviction that the burthens and forced labour imposed by the Kurds on the Armenians should be abolished; they do not exist by any right, but are an abuse of long standing.

"They also consider that the benefit of the reforms agreed to in favour of the Armenians should, in common justice, be extended to the numerous Nestorians who inhabit the central and southern parts of Kurdistan (caza of Joulamerik).

"It is to be regretted that the paragraph in the note relating to a certain sum to be set aside for local purposes, such as the maintenance of schools and the execution of public works, is not more clearly expressed. It may be admitted, however, that it includes the germ of a financial principle of some value, and this principle, the Powers think, may be laid down in the following terms:—

"The taxes will be divided into two branches. The one branch, including the Customs and the salt tax, will be applied to Imperial purposes. The other, derived from the revenues of the vilayet, will be applied in the first instance to meet the administrative service of the province. Of the balance, a portion would be retained for local purposes, and the remainder remitted to Constantinople. If this is the correct interpretation of the proposal contained in the note of the 5th July, it corresponds more or less with Article 19 of the draft Organic Statutes for the provinces of European Turkey, presented by the Sublime Porte to the Eastern Roumelian Commission for examination. So far as it establishes the principle that the provincial expenditure is a first charge on a portion of the taxes, the reform is certainly valuable, but the principle would require to be surrounded by the same safeguards as those that have been elaborated by the Commission for Administrative Reforms.

"The Undersigned must, moreover, remark that such revenues as have been already hypothecated cannot be applied to other purposes.

"The principle of decentralisation, which is especially necessary in provinces inhabited by a population of a different creed from that of the central authority,

is not treated in a satisfactory manner in your Excellency's note. No effectual reforms can be expected until the position of the Governors-General is thoroughly changed. It is true that the note admits that their duties will be extended and their functions guaranteed, but assurances of such a general character leave the question quite unsolved. Unless the increase of power and responsibility, which is absolutely indispensable to a proper discharge of the duties of a Governor-General, is clearly defined, unless formal guarantees are given to this important functionary as to the tenure of his office, no opinion can be formed of the value of the proposed reforms. It is clear that the Governors-General should have some definite understanding as to the period during which they will hold office, and they must be released from the constant interference with the minutest details of their administration which has hitherto paralysed their action. It is needless to add that, if this increased independence of the Valis is desirable everywhere, it is absolutely necessary in the case of provinces inhabited by the Armenians.

"The Powers are therefore of opinion that the proposals of the Ottoman Government are inadequate to their object; that greater attention must be paid to the local wants of these provinces; that a greater development must be given to the two great principles of equality and decentralisation; that more effective arrangements must be made for the organisation of the police, and for the protection of the populations exposed to the molestations of the Circassians and Kurds; and, lastly, that the tenure of office and extent of the functions of the Governors-General must be clearly defined. In this way, and in this way only, can full satisfaction be given to the rights and expectations created by the 61st Article of the Berlin Treaty.

"The Sublime Porte seeks to modify the bearing of this Article by quoting the alleged percentage of the Armenians and of the Christian population in general on the whole population. The percentage quoted by the note differs so widely from that given by other authorities that the Powers are quite unable to accept it as accurate.

"The enclosed figures⁽¹⁾ of the population, supplied by the Armenian Patriarch, will show the wide difference that exists between the various estimates. The note of the 5th July only gives the proportion of the Mussulman and Christian populations. The Powers would wish to know the basis on which this calculation is made. They consider it essential that an approximative census of the respective numbers of the Mussulmans and Christians inhabiting the provinces mentioned in Article 61 should be made with as little delay as possible by an impartial Commission, the composition of which will be hereafter determined.

"It must be distinctly understood that the Porte will accept the result of a census, made under circumstances that would guarantee its being thoroughly impartial, and frame the organisation of the provinces accordingly.

"It will probably be found on adopting this plan that, in order to meet all the local wants, the present geographical limits of the various vilayets will have to be re-cast.

"The Porte cannot take advantage of the delay occasioned by the taking of the proposed census for putting off the execution of measures of an urgent character.

(1) *Vide* the Comparative Table on the last page of this chapter.

"It is absolutely necessary to carry out, without loss of time, the reforms intended to secure the life and property of the Armenians; to take immediate measures against the incursions of the Kurds; to carry out at once the proposed system of finance; to place the Gendarmerie provisionally on a more satisfactory footing; and, above all, to give to the Governors-General greater security of office and a more extended responsibility.

"In conclusion, the Powers once more recall to the Sublime Porte the essential fact that the reforms to be introduced into the provinces inhabited by the Armenians are, by Treaty engagements, to be adapted to local wants, and to be carried out under the supervision of the Powers.

"The Undersigned, &c.

(Signed) "HATZFELDT.
"NOVIKOW.
"G. J. GOSCHEN.
"CORTI.
"TISSOT.
"CALICE."

A great deal might be said about this note and certain objections raised to the plan of reforms which it suggests. The intentions of the Ambassadors are no doubt excellent, and the general tone of their remonstrances is one which becomes the representatives of Europe towards a State in whose internal affairs they have a right to interfere. But between the lines of this long dissertation it is easy to detect the weak point of the position assumed by these protectors of Armenia. Agreeing with each other as to the object to be attained, they are far from unanimous as to the means to be employed in case Turkey should persist in ignoring her obligations. If the Powers had come to an understanding on this subject, if they could have given a practical sanction to their right interpretation of Article 61 of the Berlin Treaty, they would certainly not have wasted time in discussing at such length the more or less serious character of vague promises, and in proposing in their turn solutions of questionable efficacy. They would at once have told the Ottoman Government what some day they will certainly have to say, viz.: "The time has come for Europe to demand, in execution of the 61st Article of the Berlin Treaty, not words but deeds. Is Turkish Armenia in possession of the promised improvements and reforms? Is security from the Circassians and the Kurds guaranteed? If the reply to these questions is in the negative, it makes but little difference whether the cause is inability or unwillingness; the execution shall be effected of our own accord—that is to say, the representatives

of Europe, constituted as an International Commission, will exercise direct interference in the appointment and control of the upper officials, the staff of the higher courts of justice, and the officers and inspectors entrusted with organising—if requisite, with European elements—the Gendarmerie and local Police.”

As these forcible words could not be uttered, and the main recommendation of all the Consuls—“not men, but measures”—appeared to be forgotten, the result could be foreseen. The language of the Powers had been strong enough to revive the hopes of the populations, and make them feel the wretchedness of their present position more bitterly; but it had not been sufficiently strong to give the Porte the impression of being exposed to any immediate danger in consequence of its indolence or unwillingness. Consequently, on the 3rd October, 1880, without making the slightest reference to the censures which had been addressed to it, and even appearing to completely ignore the Collective Note of the 7th September, the Porte, assuming a haughty tone, merely notified the Powers of what it intended to do. This is the document, noteworthy for both what it promises and what it does not promise:—

“Reforms in districts inhabited by Armenians.”

“The Ottoman Government having pledged itself, in virtue of Article 61 of the Treaty of Berlin, to carry out without delay the reforms necessitated by local requirements in places inhabited by Armenians, to ensure their security against the Circassians and Kurds, and periodically to communicate the measures to be taken with this view to the Powers who are to watch over their application, it had, on the conclusion of peace, dispatched inspectors to the spot. If the communications made to the Contracting Powers with regard to the inquiry with which these inspectors were charged were not complete, the reason is that, putting aside a few improvements hastily introduced into the police administration of certain districts, the Imperial Government had been unable to accomplish all the reforms necessary. At present, by the care of Baker Pasha and other officials of the Empire, the Government has completed the prescribed inquiry, and decided to apply the following measures:—

“1. With the view of ensuring order and the security of the inhabitants, the Courts of the provinces of Erzeroum, Van, Bitlis, and Diarbekir will be still better organised and reformed, and the superintendence of this reform will be the special mission of a Mushire of the Empire.

“2. Within the lapse of three months from the day on which the assurances asked of the Powers shall have been obtained, the Imperial Government will re-organise the Police and Gendarmerie of the above-mentioned provinces, so as permanently to secure public order and safety.

“3. The colonels of the Gendarmerie (Alai Bejis) will be named by the Imperial War Ministry. The choice of the remaining officers will be left to the Regimental

Councils, and their nomination will be confirmed by the War Department, on the proposal of the Governors-General. The latter will be authorised to distribute the police agents throughout their provinces according to local requirements, and on their advice the Minister of War will recall those colonels and officers of Gendarmerie who may be found incapable of exercising their functions.

"4. The mode of organising the communes formulated in the Note of the Sublime Porte dated the 5th July last will be completed in the space of four months, and in the interests of the State.

"5. With the exception of the Customs and indirect taxes, all the remaining revenues of the provinces indicated will be first of all applied to the requirements of the provincial budgets, which comprise the other important expenses. A tax of 10 per cent. will be raised on the surplus of these same revenues for local requirements, such as education and public works; and the remainder, including the surplus which may result from the said assignment of 10 per cent., will be sent to Constantinople.

"6. The selection and nomination of the provincial judicial functionaries will take place in conformity with the existing special regulation; and as to the administrative functionaries, they will be named in virtue of an Imperial ordinance issued on the proposition of the Governor-General, supported by the unanimous agreement of the departments with which they are connected. The Governors-General will have the right, in carrying out these regulations, to dismiss and appoint the administrative functionaries of their provinces, with the exception of the Prefects (*Mutessarifs*), the Directors of Finance (*Defterdars*), and the Secretaries-General (*Mektoubjis*). In the selection of these functionaries, merit and integrity will alone be considered. All subjects of the Empire will be eligible for public appointments by the terms of Article 62 of the Treaty of Berlin, as well as in accordance with the provisions of existing Ottoman laws, provided they combine the necessary qualifications mentioned.

"7. The Nizamieh Courts will apply the Ottoman Code (*Medjellé*) and the other laws in force in the Empire."

In spite of the conciliatory appearance of this document, its real meaning could not escape a sagacious diplomatist. Mr. Goschen did not hesitate to call the Turkish Note "aggressive." The Porte, in fact, did not even deign to reply to the Collective Note of 7th September. To all intents and purposes, it gave the Powers to understand that if it consented to carry out Article 61 of the Berlin Treaty, it would do so independently, and in its own way. The Powers had merely to thankfully register the vague promises which it was pleased to give them. Mr. Goschen regretfully remarked, after the lapse of some weeks, that Europe had not so far uttered a word of protest against this attitude, so contrary to the real spirit of the Treaty of Berlin. It is true that at that moment the question of the settlement of the

Montenegrin frontier had just entered upon an acute phase. It was at the time that the Albanian League was forbidding Turkey to cede Dulcigno, and when the combined fleets were engaged in a demonstration which only made the Porte give way in the month of December. Mr. Goschen was fain to admit that it was essential to settle this complication before reverting to the Armenian question. But he observed with uneasiness that another idea commenced to take root in certain States, to the effect that when the difficulty of the moment had been surmounted, it would be expedient, instead of demanding from the Porte the execution of other engagements, to grant it a respite. "I cannot," wrote the British Ambassador, "too strongly express my profound conviction of the dangers of such a course. . . . Precisely as in European Turkey the Ottoman authorities will take no steps which would offend the Albanians, so in Asia Minor it is hopeless to expect that they will do anything which might offend the Kurds." Mr. Goschen therefore asks whether the time has not come for England to summon the other Powers Signatories to the Treaty of Berlin to unite with her for a combined effort to ameliorate the state of things in Asia. "If they refuse, or give only lukewarm support, the responsibility will not lie with Her Majesty's Government."⁽¹⁾

An effort of this nature was all the more urgent, as all the reports from Armenia depicted the condition of the Armenian provinces in ever darker colours. It appeared that in many respects the patience of the people was exhausted. The hope of promised reforms had given way to profound discouragement and smothered irritation. The so-called reform in the formation of communes and appointment of Mudirs was being carried out in a really ridiculous manner.⁽²⁾ "The absurdity of the scheme," writes a Consul, "is becoming each day more manifest." Moreover, the way in which the scheme was being carried out only served to make its defects more apparent. The numbers of the Mussulman and Christian populations, which were to determine the predominating element, were completely altered. The selection of Mudirs or Administrators was wretchedly conducted. Thus, in the district of Passin, only one Mudir out of seventeen could read and write Turkish; two or three

(¹) Dispatch of 16th November, 1880, from Mr. Goschen to Earl Granville. *Blue-Book, Turkey*, No. 6 (1881), page 242.

(²) Captain Clayton calls it "a perfect farce." Dispatch of 16th November, 1880. *Blue-Book, Turkey*, No. 6 (1881), page 288.

Armenian assistants could read and write in their own language, and the remainder were totally illiterate.⁽¹⁾

Not only was no notice taken of the protests which these appointments evoked, but the Turkish authorities affected to consider such protests, and, as a rule, complaints of any description, as perfectly contemptible and ridiculous. Moreover, there was no improvement in the staff of upper officials, nor in any branch of the administration. Comparing the state of the country at the end of 1880 with what it was in 1879, Mr. Everett considers it worse in every respect. "If a year ago," he writes, "there was little security for life and property, now there is still less; if there was poverty, it is greater; if there was injustice, so there is at present; while the crimes of oppression and corruption have increased proportionately with the impoverished state of the Empire."⁽²⁾ Consequently the population is exasperated, and, without there being any plan or premeditation, it happens oftener than formerly that even among the inoffensive Rayah—who, having borne the yoke for several centuries, are, as a rule, patient to excess—particularly shameful acts provoke disturbances and local riots.⁽³⁾ Far from searching for a remedy for these evils, the Government appears to be preoccupied with only one idea—that of keeping the Armenians down by favouring the Kurds.⁽⁴⁾ It gets Martini guns distributed amongst the latter, whilst it forbids the Armenians to carry arms, even for their personal defence.⁽⁵⁾

In a Circular of 12th January, 1881, Earl Granville instructed the Ambassadors of Her Majesty at Paris, Berlin, Vienna, St. Petersburg, and Rome to call the attention of the Governments to which they were accredited to the state of affairs in Armenia. "The way in which the Porte is dealing with its offer of reforms," the Circular said, "would appear to furnish grounds for remonstrance on the part of the representatives, and Her Majesty's Government would be glad if

(1) Dispatch from Captain Everett of 16th December, 1880. *Ibid*, page 293.

(2) Same dispatch, page 294.

(3) See an illustrative story of one of these riots provoked by the exactions and brutalities of a *Bimbashi* (Major) on a journey, in a dispatch from Captain Clayton. *Blue-Book*, Turkey (1881), pp. 290, 291.

(4) "I should not be surprised if the leniency of the Turkish authorities in dealing with Sheik Obeydullah, and the Kurds generally, were due to an idea that they might be useful in keeping down the Armenians" (*Blue-Book*, *ibid*, page 292).

(5) In reference to this act, and for a description of the state of things in general, see the petition of 900 Armenians of Van in the same *Blue-Book*, page 288. In the dispatch which accompanies this petition, Captain Clayton says that he guarantees the accuracy of the facts alleged: "I entirely endorse what is stated in this paper."

the — Government would instruct their Ambassador at Constantinople to join with his colleagues in a representation to the Sublime Porte on the subject."⁽¹⁾

Had the British Government any hope of obtaining an affirmative reply to this proposal? or, being certain in advance of the result of its action, was it particularly anxious to free itself from responsibility by showing the refusal of the other Powers Signatories to the Treaty of Berlin to take action? It appears to me that what renders the latter hypothesis probable is the scant energy which England displayed in her demands, and the absence of any hint on her part as to giving material sanction to the fresh remonstrances proposed. There was no question even, as in 1879, of a naval demonstration; and, therefore, how could it be expected that an Oriental Government would be induced, by mere reasoning and eloquent appeals to law and humanity, to shake off its traditional indolence? If any Power at that time had considered it compatible with its interests to reply frankly to the English proposal, it would have said to Earl Granville: "Our isolated demands have not been listened to; our Identical Note was answered evasively; our Collective Note has not been answered at all—in fact, no notice has been taken of it. The situation is such that if Armenia does not at once rebel, it is because the reign of terror and extermination which oppresses her deprives her of the strength to do so. What, therefore, do you expect from a fresh Collective Note, if the Turkish Government is not convinced that, in case it continues to act in violation of Article 61 of the Berlin Treaty, Europe will carry it into effect of its own accord? If, as is right, you ask for deeds and not words, begin by proving yourself that you are ready to pass from threats to action."

But no Great Power used this language, probably because it would have implied on the part of the one that did so an intention to take action of some sort, and because at that time, as on so many occasions, Christian and civilised Europe was more occupied with its intestine quarrels and jealousies than with its collective duties. So there was nothing but a diplomatic comedy. Russia replied that she was ready to join in the platonic proceeding proposed if it met with the assent of the Powers Signatory to the Treaty of Berlin.⁽²⁾ Italy sent a similar reply.⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ *Blue-Book*. Turkey, No. 6 (1881), page 290.

⁽²⁾ Note from Mr. de Giers to Earl Dufferin, 20th January / 1st February, 1881. *Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 6 (1881), page 320.

⁽³⁾ Note from Count Maffei to Sir A. Paget, 1st February, 1881. *Ibid*, page 321.

The Austrian representative at Constantinople was instructed "to communicate with his colleagues, and to call the attention of the Porte to the question in concert with them, but not by collective representation, for which he does not think there is sufficient occasion."⁽¹⁾ Mr. Barthélémy Saint-Hilaire, on behalf of France, replied to Lord Lyons, rather verbosely, as follows:—

"I recognise the importance of the object you propose to us, and I shall have no objection to prosecute it in concert with the other Powers; but from the indications I receive from our Ambassador at Berlin, I fear that there may be a difficulty in arriving at an agreement among the Cabinets to this effect. M. de Saint-Vallier informs me that on Lord Odo Russell transmitting to the German Chancery a suggestion analogous to that with which your Excellency had the goodness to acquaint me, Prince Bismarck expressed the opinion that there would be serious inconvenience in raising the Armenian question before the definitive settlement of the Greek question, and that by so doing there would be a risk of bringing to an almost certain check the efforts which the Powers are now making to settle the Turco-Hellenic difference.

"I shall be obliged if you will be good enough to inform me whether the Government of the Queen, notwithstanding the objections raised by the German Government, still consider the present opportune for the line of action they recommended to us at Constantinople."⁽²⁾

Perhaps it would have been better for the French Minister merely to reply like Italy or Russia, than to entrench himself behind the refusal of Germany. The final result would, however, have been the same, considering the plainly expressed opinion of Prince Bismarck that it was better to concentrate the representations of the Powers on one question at a time, if it were not desired to supply the Porte with a plausible excuse for fresh delay. "When the Greek question is over, then will be the moment to begin the Armenian question."⁽³⁾ No doubt it suited the political aims of Prince Bismarck to make this reply. It is none the less true that from the point of view of the execution of the Berlin Treaty there resulted this extraordinary consequence, that Turkey was in some degree encouraged to lend herself with the greatest possible reluctance to the execution of Article 24 of the Berlin Treaty respecting the new Greek frontier, in order to delay by so much the execution of Article 61 relating to the Armenian provinces.

(1) Dispatch from Sir H. Elliott to Earl Granville, 25th January, 1881. *Ibid*, page 313.

(2) Note from Mr. Barthélémy Saint-Hilaire to Lord Lyons, 29th January, 1881. *Ibid*, pages 314, 315.

(3) Dispatch from Lord Odo Russell to Earl Granville, 28th January, 1881. *Ibid*, page 313.

However that may be, the immediate consequence of the attitude of Germany and France was to indefinitely postpone any fresh collective action of the Powers on behalf of Turkish Armenia. England, on her part, no longer reported in her Blue-Books the manner in which her "protégés" and those of Europe were treated. Did they delude themselves with the hope that by refusing to listen to the complaint the suffering would be alleviated? Or that the Turkish Government, doing violence to its habits and tastes, would spontaneously and sincerely effect those reforms which unanimous diplomatic pressure had been unable to extract from it? A slight consideration of notorious and salient facts during the period which extends from 1881 to the present time, would at once show the fallaciousness of any such hope, if it ever existed.

Since the foregoing was in print, the Government, after a long suspension of diplomatic information on the subject, have laid before Parliament a Blue-Book on Armenian affairs. We extract from it the following dispatch addressed to the Foreign Office by the late Mr. Clifford Lloyd, H.M. Consul at Erzeroum. This important document is but of yesterday, and it speaks for itself. While naturally disposed to take a lenient view of the conduct of the Porte, Mr. Clifford Lloyd is clear as to the need in which the Armenians stand of protection, and as to the necessity for general reforms.⁽¹⁾ He says:—

"It is admitted by everyone that a change is necessary in the system of government now being applied to the Christian population of Kurdistan, i.e., the Armenian people. Their sufferings at present proceed from three direct causes:—

"1. The insecurity of their lives and properties, owing to the habitual ravages of the Kurds.

"2. The insecurity of their persons, and the absence of all liberty of thought and action (excepting the exercise of public worship).

"3. The unequal status held by the Christian as compared with the Mussulman in the eyes of the Government.

"As regards No. 1, putting aside isolated instances of depredation, there has been pillage on the most extensive scale, with much slaughter, by Kurds in various parts of Armenia during the past few months, as will be observed from my dispatches dated the 21st August and the 1st October, 1890. This year the record is an exceptionally large one, but the position of the defenceless Armenian peasantry with reference to the Kurds, who are all armed, varies only in degree, and, looked at from any point of view, is one calling for immediate relief.

"There are two courses open to the Turkish Government in its desire to protect its Armenian subjects—one to actually and completely subjugate the Kurds by force

(¹) *Blue-Book. Turkey, No. 1 (1890-1).*

of arms, and the other to adequately protect the Armenian peasants from Kurdish aggression.

"The former would entail a large expenditure of money, and in all probability bring about a general massacre of those for whose benefit it was undertaken. Many reasons exist for not suggesting this course, not the least of which is that, under any circumstances, the Turkish Government could not be induced to adopt it.

"It is, however, the first duty of every Government to protect its subjects, and in this instance duty and self-interest both demand it. The Armenian peasantry are unable at present to pay their taxes, owing to the ravages of the Kurds, and from the same cause are reduced to such a state of discontent that they are willing even to forsake their homes, and it is said also their religion, if relief could thus be obtained.

"A better organised force of police than exists, supported by judiciously placed detachments of troops, would afford all the desired protection, provided the officers responsible were satisfied of the intentions of the Government. Much would depend upon the personal characters of the Governors-General, who, while being held responsible for the adequate protection of the inhabitants of their provinces, should be given full executive liberty of action in providing it, which at present they do not possess. A Governor-General has no power to move troops without orders from Constantinople, but the duty devolving upon him renders it necessary to give to him this power, with whatever restrictions it may be thought necessary to impose from a military point of view. I am of opinion that this question of protecting the Armenian peasantry from the attacks of the Kurds is of much greater importance than any other, and that if the Christians were shielded from the ever-existing apprehension of being pillaged and killed, they would become a comparatively contented and prosperous people. Though all sections of the Armenian people are ever desirous of bringing their grievances to the knowledge of Her Majesty's Consul, yet during the past year I have had no serious complaints, excepting in connection with the disturbances in Erzeroum, which were not directly due to Kurdish aggression. In the valley of Alashgird, for instance, where there was much distress this spring, and whence an attempt to emigrate to Persia was made on a large scale, the Turkish officials discerned a revolutionary movement, and their consequent acts gave legitimate cause for much discontent. But the Christians, having been reduced to a state of poverty by the action of the neighbouring Kurds in plundering and burning their harvest with impunity, were unable to pay their taxes or to provide for the following season's agricultural requirements, and, no attempt being made by the Government to punish the Kurds, or to afford protection against them in the future, some hundreds of persons started for Persia, where they had made arrangements to be received, but were arrested on the frontier by Turkish officials, and brought back to their homes. All the Christians asked for was protection, but this was the one thing the Turkish Government failed to provide. Time was offered for the payment of taxes due, and loans of money for the purchase of seed; but, notwithstanding my advice, given on the subject repeatedly, no protection was afforded, the answer always being that authority for the movement of troops had not been received from Constantinople. The result is that this summer the valley has been again overrun by the Kurds, who here, as in other parts of Kurdistan, openly declare that their action meets with the approval of the Turkish Government. I am fully justified in recording my opinion that during the past year, had the Armenian peasantry been

given security to life and property, their grievances in the provinces would not have been of that serious nature which now attracts to them the attention of Europe.

"As to the second ground of complaint above mentioned, I need not go into any detail to show that the Turkish Government gives no liberty of person to the Armenians, and denies them any freedom of thought or action. In my dispatch dated the 28th June, 1890, I fully explained the policy being locally adopted in this respect. I believe that the idea of revolution is not entertained by any class of the Armenian people in these provinces, whatever may be the aims of those outside them. An armed revolution is, besides, impossible. Discontent or any description of protest is, however, regarded by the Turkish Local Government as seditious, and a policy such as I described in my dispatch alluded to is pursued, depriving the Armenian subject of every liberty to his person, and for which no justification exists. This materially aggravates the existing discontent, and produces a feeling of animosity between Mussulman and Christian which would otherwise die out, or which would at least lie dormant. A policy, on the other hand, of trust and conciliation would bring forth, in my opinion, results highly conducive to the interests of the Ottoman Empire, for among its subjects there are none more capable of contributing to its financial resources than the Armenian people.

"The third cause is the inequality of justice and consideration shown to the Christian inhabitants of this country, both by the Executive Government and by the Law Officers. This is well known to everyone conversant with the condition of Kurdistan; but, as an instance, I may mention the fact that in all crimes of violence of which the Christians have been the victims during the past year in the province of Erzeroum no one has been punished, nor, with very few exceptions, has any effort been even made to bring the offenders to justice.

"On the 20th June of this year a Mussulman mob attacked unoffending Armenians in the streets of Erzeroum, killing and wounding many, and at the same time pillaging their houses and shops, but up to date no steps of any kind have to my knowledge been taken to prosecute the guilty persons. In one case an Armenian shopkeeper applied to the Governor for redress, and was referred to the Procureur-Général, to whom he detailed all the facts, giving the names of the offenders and eye-witnesses to the attack and robbery. The offenders were arrested, but next day released, since which no further action has been taken. On the other hand, Christians have been arrested and detained in prison for long periods without any charge being made against them.

"As I found in Egypt in 1883, so it is in this part of Turkey; the laws are not to be condemned as bad, many being excellent in theory; but it is the application and administration of the law by officials which leaves room for so much improvement. It is generally admitted by English officers of experience, such as Colonel Chermiside and others, that the Porte has made successful efforts during the past ten years to purify the administration of the law and of the general service of government, and I gladly bear evidence to having personally observed proofs of an existing desire to do so. At the same time much remains to be done.

"The circumstances under which this country is governed, its distance from and the difficulty of communicating with Constantinople, the discordant elements within it, the serious risk of internal misgovernment producing external agitation and political complications, the absence of any means of expressing the local public opinion of any class or division of the people, all indicate the immense power for good or evil wielded by Governors-General in these outlying frontier provinces of the Empire, and the special qualifications necessary in those appointed to fill these high offices. Second only in importance to the post of Governor-General is that of the Procureur-Général, upon whom the administration of the law depends. He has opportunities of contaminating at its source the fountain of justice, while, if free from the taint of corruption himself, his position enables him to almost secure purity in its various channels. The selection of this officer, therefore, requires as much care as that of one to fill the higher office of Governor.

"The adoption of a policy based upon the considerations I have endeavoured shortly to indicate would, I believe, meet all the present requirements of the country, and would produce an immediate amelioration in the condition of the people, both Mussulman and Christian, for trade and the prosperity of both classes depend largely upon the well-being of the latter. Whatever other reforms may be desirable, they are not of the same pressing necessity as immediate measures for the protection of the lives and properties of the people. The agricultural portion of the Armenian people plead not as rebels but as subjects of His Majesty the Sultan for this protection; but, in the words of the Note presented ten years ago to the Sublime Porte on this same subject, the Local Government at Erzeroum seems 'to refuse to recognise the degree of anarchy which exists' in this province, or 'the gravity of a state of things which, if permitted to continue, would in all probability lead to the destruction of the Christian population of vast districts.'

"At present also more radical reforms would meet with determined, if only passive, opposition on the part of the Moslem community, which is largely in the majority. If the policy I advocate was adopted in sincerity and proclaimed by the Porte, the influence of the British Government should alone suffice to secure its local application.

"It has been said in the House of Commons that the British Government does not carry influence at Constantinople. I have to acknowledge the support and confidence extended to me by Her Majesty's Ambassador, and, in refutation of the statement mentioned, to remark that since the country has been in a disturbed state (June 20, 1890), out of six measures of the first importance for the adoption of which by the Porte I asked Sir William White to use his influence, four have already been fully adopted and carried out, and a fifth is in course of execution, owing, I must presume, entirely to his Excellency's influence. I therefore see no reason to doubt that if the equitable policy I so strongly recommend be approved of by Her Majesty's Ambassador and the Marquis of Salisbury, and adopted by the Porte, the influence of the British Government will be adequate to its proper local application.

(Signed) "CLIFFORD LLOYD.

"Erzeroum, October 2, 1890."

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF THE POPULATION OF THE SIX VILAYETS.

	Erzeroum.	Van, Mouche, Bitlis.	Sivas.	Kärpout.	Diarbekir.	Aleppo.	Total.	Total.	Grand total.
<i>Armenians.</i>									
Armenian	110,000	250,000	40,000	140,000	80,000	80,000	700,000		
" Catholics	10,000	2,000	10,000	5,000	8,000	10,000	45,000		
" Protestants ...	1,000	500	2,000	10,000	800	500	14,800		
" Greeks .....	.....	.....	.....	3,000	.....	.....	3,000		
" Alevis Kizil- bach	10,000	.....	5,000	.....	.....	.....	15,000		
" Pashas	3,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3,000		
	134,000	252,500	57,000	158,000	88,000	90,500		780,800	
<i>Greeks.</i>									
Greeks	5,000	.....	5,000	2,000	5,000	.....	17,000		
" Catholics .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	6,000	6,000		
	5,000	.....	5,000	2,000	5,000	6,000		23,000	
<i>Syrians.</i>									
Syrian Nestorians ...	.....	85,000	.....	5,000	40,000	40,000	170,000		
" Catholics.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	15,000	66,000	81,000		
	.....	85,000	.....	5,000	55,000	106,000		251,000	
<i>Turks.</i>									
Turks	50,000	20,000	50,000	60,000	40,000	50,000	270,000		
Circassians	10,000	.....	15,000	10,000	15,000	.....	50,000		
	60,000	20,000	65,000	70,000	55,000	50,000		320,000	
<i>Mixed.</i>									
Yezidis .....	.....	20,000	.....	.....	5,000	.....	25,000		
Tschinguians	10,000	.....	.....	5,000	.....	5,000	20,000		
Kizilbach .....	.....	.....	.....	15,000	15,000	.....	30,000		
Jews .....	.....	1,500	.....	.....	.....	.....	1,500		
	10,000	21,500	.....	20,000	20,000	5,000		76,500	
<i>Nomad.</i>									
Kurdish Zazas.....	60,000	70,000	15,000	30,000	.....	15,000	190,000		
" Alevis .....	.....	.....	.....	10,000	40,000	.....	50,000		
" Arabs .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	30,000	40,000	70,000		
" Afchars .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	10,000	10,000		
" Bedouin } Fahris... }	.....	40,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	40,000		
Turcomans .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	20,000	20,000		
	60,000	110,000	15,000	40,000	70,000	85,000		380,000	
									776,50
									1,831,30

N.B.—The above Tabular Statement of population is that forming a part of the Collective Note of September, 1880. *Fide* page 92.





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